

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1407924

# THE HEALING SHADOW

WILLIAM A. QUAYE



Methodist  
Historical Society

*Southern California-Arizona  
Conference*



The Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE  
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA







## OTHER BOOKS BY BISHOP QUAYLE

BOOKS AS A DELIGHT  
THE THRONE OF GRACE  
BESIDE LAKE BEAUTIFUL  
POEMS  
THE CLIMB TO GOD  
A STUDY IN CURRENT SOCIAL THEORIES  
LAYMEN IN ACTION  
THE SONG OF SONGS  
THE PASTOR-PREACHER  
GOD'S CALENDAR  
IN GOD'S OUT-OF-DOORS  
THE PRAIRIE AND THE SEA  
LOWELL  
THE BLESSED LIFE  
ETERNITY IN THE HEART  
A HERO AND SOME OTHER FOLK  
THE POET'S POET AND OTHER ESSAYS  
BOOKS AND LIFE  
RECOVERED YESTERDAYS IN LITERATURE  
THE DYNAMITE OF GOD  
THE UNCOMMON COMMONPLACE  
WITH EARTH AND SKY

THE HEALING  
SHADOW

By  
WILLIAM A. QUAYLE



THE ABINGDON PRESS

NEW YORK

CINCINNATI

Copyright, 1923, by  
WILLIAM A. QUAYLE

Theology Library  
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY  
AT CLAREMONT  
California

Printed in the United States of America



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
I. THE HEALING SHADOW . . . . .	7
II. THE IMPENITENT CHRIST . . . . .	23
III. GOD'S CHARACTER . . . . .	43
IV. MYSTERY A CREDENTIAL OF CHRISTIANITY . . . . .	53
V. WHERE IS ZEBEDEE? . . . . .	77
VI. THE CITY AND JESUS CHRIST . . . . .	93
VII. HEADED INTO SPRING . . . . .	107
VIII. GOD'S OWN NOTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE . . . . .	115
IX. THE HUSHED PROPHETS . . . . .	131
X. A PARABLE . . . . .	147
XI. THE UNIVERSAL BUILDER . . . . .	161
XII. THE GARDENER . . . . .	181
XIII. GOD'S FULLNESS . . . . .	201
XIV. OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN . . . . .	215
XV. THE FRIEND OF THE BRUISED REED . . . . .	223
XVI. THE COMFORTER . . . . .	241
XVII. "THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD" . . . . .	261
XVIII. A LORD'S DAY PASTORAL . . . . .	281

## PRAYER

LORD, we make our prayer to thee, and truly it is as a homecoming to our hearts. More and more does the realization of the blessedness of prayer come to us with measureless comfort and very great peace. We have been from home and have had heart hunger for our mother and our father, and our father and our mother. Sometimes father would be first to come to our hearts, and at other times our mother was first in our love; but they two and all the housings of our lives for blessed years came over us with a warmth and yearning like the breath across a harvest field and we *wanted* so to get home, just to get home. And when we came, O the welcome of it, and the heartening, and how all our hungerings were forgot in the welcome and the kiss and the dear eyes looking love on us and through us. And even so as the days wend their way into the years does our coming to thyself in prayer come to be a homecoming to our hearts. We have no father now, on earth, nor any mother. They have gone with smiling out into the heavenly land, and their wistful "Meet me there" still sings with sobbings in our memories, and we needs must have some other heart to which to come, and that heart and that home is thyself, O Lord God our Father. Father and Mother art thou to us, and in thee our wanderings find their feet on the home paths again and our eyes rest in end of quest on the dear home faces. Heavenly Master, thy name is comfort to us and thy heart is our true home.

We offer thee our prayer not as being our bounden duty, as in truth it surely is, but as being our home feeling and home finding. We want thee, want to be near thee, want to climb as we did when children, sleepy and tired, up into dear arms, which were never so weary they were loath to receive us. So we would climb up into the arms of our God. That is prayer. We are not coming as a religious obligation but as a filial return. We want thee, we are homesick for thee. All we are hastes out thy way, and we make our prayer.

Thou wilt not be critical. We feel sure of the content of our prayer. Thou art our Father, and fathers are not critical. They love the voices of their beloved and thou lovest our voices. We are thy beloved. Halleluiah! Amen.

## I

### THE HEALING SHADOW

"That at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."—*Acts 5. 15.*

It was bright sunlight in Jerusalem. Not a cloud flecked the sky. The cobalt dome of the heavens lifted high and glorious with not even a banner of cirrus cloud floating very high and far. The poetry of the book of God is ubiquitous. Go where you may poetry will blossom out springwise at your feet. It is so here. Why should a preacher say it was sunshiny in Jerusalem when no word is spoken in the sacred text of cloudlessness of sky or radiancy of sunlight? The answer lies not in accusing the preacher of romancing, nor yet in looking at the sky, but in looking at the ground. That is essential poetry always that not where we should have thought to see things we behold them but in unexpected places. To find things where they were to be looked for is prose; to find things where they were not to be looked for is poetry. To look for the sky where the sky is is one thing. To look and see the sky where it is not is another thing. I shall see the sky above me azure and heavenly, like fair angels garmented in blue and

flying in limitless ecstasy and multitude. The sky is always there. The sun is in its heavens as God is in his. Above us are the crystal skies and the blazing sun. But to walk along muddy ways with the slop and slush of oozing mud at every step, watching only for the passing of the feet with as little mud as may be, and then and there to see a whole heaven blue and sweet beneath your feet in a mud-puddle—that is in the nature of highest poetry, the unanticipated poetry of Him who waketh us from slumber with the sunrise kiss. Our heads are bowed.

We are walking on the crabbed streets of not overclean Jerusalem. We watch to keep from stumbling, we have no heed for the sun. The way is lit, and that we take for granted—as we do most mercies. And thus, as with bowed heads and eyes attent on the ground only, unexpectant of the sky, a *shadow* moves along the ground. Poetry. Where a shadow falls there must be sunshine. It is a sunny day in Jerusalem because the crowd is attent to catch the shadow of Peter passing by. So say once more, preacher, with a sunrise in your voice, “It was bright sunlight in Jerusalem and not a cloud flecked the sky.” We mark Peter’s shadow moving on the ground and know the sun is moving majestic in the sky.

Now this Brother Peter, the Reverend Peter Jonas, sometime minister in Jerusalem and in the circuit round about, is a peculiarly useful brother: not so much by what he was as by what



he was not. Not to speak slightly of him or discourteously of him, we may and must in accuracy say that he was so many things he should not have been as to strike us as bizarre. He is frankly humorous, not by possessing humor but by its absence. He was impertinent, not meaning it but not knowing it. He, to use the recorded phrase which is quite unforgettable "Then Peter took him [Jesus] and began to rebuke him," contradicting Jesus to his face. He was thick-skinned which is one of the hardest known diseases to cure. His lack of humor made him ineligible to fine discriminations or to finesse. He blundered in, and sometimes out, but he always blundered. Sometimes he blundered on great truths and high visions. He talked when he was asleep and always while he was awake, and one who never ceases talking must sometimes say a wise thing. No sublimity awed him. In the presence of transfiguration glory, while he was sleepy as a nested bird, he blunders into speech. He rushed into the tomb of God when the finer John stayed without looking and believing, was filled with unutterable joy.

This minister will hardly stay long on any circuit, so lacking is he in tact, and with his fisherman's manners on him like the fish scales on his coat. Besides, he is much given to backsliding. He has been known to lie and curse and deny acquaintance with his Master, and has been seen to "follow him afar off." Mark the tears

in those stumbling words, for they drip like rain on very rainy days. Really, the best thing I know to say of the Reverend Peter Jonas, of Jerusalem Circuit, is that his mother-in-law lived with him. Yet it may be she had no place else to live. Mothers-in-law cannot always be choosy about their sons-in-law. There he is painted with Rembrandt flame of color and rough accuracy, and there he stays. He cannot quit him of himself, and we cannot be quit of him. Be sure he will be around when he is not wanted. He would do as the preacher I knew of. When a parishioner was dying and desired to die in peace, gave word to lock the front door when her minister was seen approaching. Her wishes were obeyed. He came and rang and rang and rang. The door was inhospitable, and the sick woman lay on her dying pillow with a suggestion of humor on her white face and undisguised content—when, lo! at her chamber door stood the parson. He had gone round to the back door, entered, ascended the stair, and now stood ready to attend to his pastoral duty. It must have been the Reverend Peter Jonas.

Frankly, what can be done with this brother or for him? Clearly, nothing. He is beyond repair. He will blunder along until his brethren will, in defense of the gospel, unfrock him. So with Brother Peter Jonas?

*Wait.* Hearten ye, brothers. There is the smell of spring in the wind and a blur of spring

on the sky. Jesus of Nazareth draweth near. See the crowd, if peradventure "the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them." Hope for the world of crude, misshapen souls, Peter's shadow has healing.

What a man was is of scant concern with Christ. He has a cure for sin. To be accurate, he has the only cure for sin. He is master of the art of making men over. That is the thing the whole earth needs; and, blessed be the Blessed Christ, that is what the whole earth may have. We are not left the prey of our subconscious selves. We are not owned by the thing or things we were. We are out in the open with God, who makes men over. He has arisen "with healing in his wings." I hear the swift and sweet approach of those wings celestial. The touch of the tip of the wing can bring us peace and the passing caress of that wing can balm us for ten thousand years. We *are* out in the open. We are not "cabined, cribbed, confined," as Shakespeare was. We are out in the open with God. Shall we listen to the jargon of heredities and environments and smell the sulphur smoke of them, or hearken to the coming feet of God, who says, "He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins"? "From their sins" is the greatest word of enfranchisement this listening world has ever heard. It is the last word in redemption. I need no more. Not how we were is the controlling consideration, but how we may

be. God has hold of us. We are in the hands of Him of whom it is plainly said, "He maketh all things new." A new heaven and a new earth are in his schedule of performances; but, more alluring and more necessary to us beleaguered mortals, he makes the soul over. He makes a new soul *out* of the old soul. Years now have I been trying in a weakling's way to utter the high things God has said to my heart, and, baffled like a mountain trying to climb the sky, I have been stumbling still toward this zenith of the new birth. There is a new theology and an old theology and a whole theology and the only theology. Having this, we need no more. We need not pout on the porches of discontent nor turn anarchists with things. We are not doomed. Our ancestors are not so baleful as we thought them. They wounded us but did not slay us. We appeal from our earthly father to "Our Father which art in heaven." We espouse a new paternity. We heave no sigh, we do not mope, we do not make tragic display of our doomful yesterdays and our smirched forebears. Nay, we run to Our Saviour. We have absolution at his cross and cleansing in his blood. He can make us every whit whole. Consider Peter's shadow and sweep your soul's gloomy sky free of clouds. If Peter, coarse and common, can become a healing shadow, what may not happen for any of us? Spring is in the wind.

Hear the sorrowing voice of Jesus on the



Supper night admonishing, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." And, lo! here he has been converted, and he is strengthening the brethren. His shadow has become a good physician. Hope for us all. By the grace of God a man may become other than he was. Peter is the proof. A man may become so filled with God as that himself in its impoverishment and meanness may be thrust out, and himself in his enrichment and robust manhood may become dynamical as the sun. Peter is the living instance. It is possible to have enough religion to overflow one's character. We have not religion in its totality until our shadows become converted. Here is a converted Peter and a converted shadow of Peter, so that he works like twin suns, neither nor both knowing that they shine. Shining is not in knowing our light but in giving out light. Peter and his shadow have encountered Christ. Truly it is sun-up, or may be noon. Enough of Christ to overflow into one's shadow? Can that be? It is. This is not theory: this is theory actualized. Watch Peter's shadow—bringing healing.

Peter is preaching Christ. He is as unconscious of himself as a flower. He is intent. His blood is hot as summer noon. He who denied Jesus may preach him. "Tell my disciples—and Peter" were the words which wrought havoc

with his heart but wrought glory in his life. Though he was counted out by himself he is counted in by Christ; and he fingers at the tattered dog's-eared copy of the book of his own life and wonders, *wonders* if the tender and mighty Christ can take that thumb-worn book and change it into a volume which need not be utterly ashamed. And he can do no other than proclaim a Christ like that. Who could? To know the Christ and what he has in heart to do, and has taken in hand to do, for everyone who will accept his help will make evangelists of us all and make us golden-throated preachers of the cross of Christ and the Christ of the cross. We shall all be swept off our feet by the amazement of the Christ and shall rush like a song from the throat of a bird in spring to fill our circumambient sky with music. So Peter preaches. He is saying "Christ." He does not note the throng. He does not perceive, sharp-eyed as he is by nature, how the one side of the street down which he walks holds crowded crowds—and they all sick. Poor emaciates sprawl everywhere on one side of the street. On the other are the hale and the strong and the bright-eyed with health. None of this Peter sees. Preaching is a strange infatuation. A man is as if in a dream, a high and holy dream, a very high and very holy dream. He sees Christ. He is caught up, raptured away and on high. He sees and hears; and what he sees and what he hears he is hot heart and burning

lips to try to proclaim. Preaching is a radiant, heavenly, apocalyptic business. There is nothing like it. It is solitary as the angel standing in the sun. Peter is preaching Christ, that Christ with whom he companied in "the days of his flesh," whose voice sounds in his ears night and day sweeter than the sound of heavenly flutes, whose vast compassion almost makes him die as he reverts to it in dreams or waking. And, hearing that mellifluous voice, and surged across and through by the anguish and agony and authority of that brave ministry which wrought the world's redemption, he sweeps along like a strong wind among the pines. He is saying and singing and singing and saying: "Ho, ye, Christ is here, the Mighty Christ, the Almighty Christ, the Undismayed Christ, the Undefeatable Christ, everybody's Christ, my Christ. Hear ye him, see ye him, take ye him. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come unto him and drink, this well of Water springing up unto everlasting Life!" And before him his shadow-side of the street is packed with the invalid crowds, babes from whose cheeks all color has gone, babes from whose cheeks the burn of fever eats like live coals and cannot be put out by any medicine they know, and mothers leaning and soothing with kisses and with tears; but tears cannot quench the fever-fires, and kisses cannot bring color to the pallid baby cheeks; and their mothers rock them in their arms and croon brokenly over them mother-

wise; and lads borne of their fathers, pathetically quiet, and unboylike—no hurrah nor romp, just acquiescent, motionless silence; and stricken women carried by husbands and sons and accompanied by weeping daughters; and little girls with the wistful motherhood foreshadowed in them, carrying limp dolls on their limp, invalid arms; and old men hobbling to catch a touch of a passing shadow; and strong men once and in their prime, but now nipped with a bitter frost and like to die—there they sprawl with faces turned toward a moving shadow; and he whose the shadow is knows not they are there or why, nor sees any save Christ. He sees Christ, is annunciative of Christ, has no mind to be a doctor, has no thought that he could be a good physician—not he. That was his Master's business who, to use Preacher Peter's words, "went about doing good." And on the preacher went, the more he preached and heeded not the sick folk nor his shadow.

"Brother Peter, stay thy preaching and look."

"Interrupt me not. I cannot stay my preaching. Time hastes. Men die. I die soon, I must preach the Christ."

"But, Brother Peter, see, ahead of thee are sick folk only, but behind thee are no sick folk. All well. See, Brother Peter."

But he cannot be impeded in his preaching but moves along like a great wind among the trees making music. Yet while he preaches we may look; and the sight is hilarious. For, truly, be-



fore him where the shadow was to pass are only sick folks, but behind him where his shadow has passed are *no* sick folks at all. Only the well folks throng and sing and smile and hug each other. Babes white-faced and drawn no longer: just well babes and youths and maids and old women and old men and men in life's prime lately smitten with disease, now strong and well and carrying their babes in their arms exultantly. What healed them? Who was their physician? Wot ye not, they have encountered the healing shadow? and, looking ahead, ye see where the moving shadow advances, the sick vanish as the dew and only well people stand and shout and fill the air with music. 'Twas Peter's shadow—and he knew it not!

Let us get no cobwebs on our brains now and think here is a demonstration of faith cure. This is no time to be small and miss majesty. This beautiful passage is not to affirm some pet dogma of some vociferous sectary. This does not establish faith cure as a remedy to the ends of time or Christianity as a doer away with doctors. The doctors may stay and remedy the body while Christianity goes on doing what no earthly physician may do—medicine the soul. That is so large a business that Christianity may not come down to doctor bodies and neglect doctoring souls—a thing that nobody else may do.

Let us be attent to what this prose-poetry of the Book of God does mean to say and does say.

It affirms the value of one's shadow. The thing we do not note and only rarely are aware of becomes a pregnant part of the life of man. What we are attent in doing and intent on doing we know. That is a matter of the purpose of the soul. But that life may become so majestic as that we work double, the man we are and the man we know not that we are, is lordly knowledge.

Peter knew not that he had a shadow. He was unaware of his magnitude. Quite right. That is as it should be. We have a modest God who hopes to make us modest folks and helps to make us so. The meek inherit a beatitude. Self-awareness is not among the characteristics of largeness anywhere any time. They who do largely must be engrossed in the thing they do and not in admiring themselves or their technique. Large life is not one of too great introspection, and certainly not one of self-admiration. We must, so to say, neglect ourselves to enlarge ourselves. Self-consciousness is not a healthy possession. Peter not cognizant of his shadow is a first lesson in the etiquette of the soul. Yet here the great truth stands out in the sun that a body's shadow may become mighty and ministrant.

What we do when we know not that we do is really the major ministry of life. We do more things than we know. How that nerves life and qualifies it! We all have shadows. We cannot help the shadow nor hinder it. The sun makes

the shadow and God makes the sun. The moving figure and the moving shadow. The shadow is voiceless; the figure moving is eloquent? Softly—are we sure that is the way of it? Is that the complete biography of life? Hardly. The shadow may be the real figure. Read biographies and see. Byron's shadow, still cast and still baleful, is all that is left of him. The Ptolemies are all shadows and shadows only. Bunyan is both figure and shadow and both eternized music. What we did when we did not know that we did becomes the real vocation of the soul. There is no theatricality in the shadow. Louis XIV's figure strutted, always strutted, and now his shadow laughs at the figure that cast it, and we, going along the road of history, see only the trivializing shadow mincing along the road while the bystanders or travelers on that way jeer at what Mark Twain has colorlessly called "Louis the Putrid."

Whether we will or not the shadow becomes our real interpreter. For ill or good mark the shadow. We must put our shadows to school to Christ if we would pass into eternal service for mankind. Peter's shadow, converted as Peter is, goes preaching a great gospel as Peter does. His shadow heals because Peter heals. Our shadows cannot outpreach us in that we must teach our shadows. The shadow stays, lasts, outlasts, but it is our shadow and learned its deeds from us. Our shadows go to school to ourselves

and we become responsible for them. We cannot evade our shadows nor disown them. In this view they become tragically great. They are not fantastical but majestic.

So, consider the shadow. What we did when we did not think we did is big with destiny. Off guard, how were we? Dare we trust the report our shadow gives of us? Are we terrified if our shadow goes walking alone and makes unhindered way along the pathways where mankind walks?

And here we arrive at the real democracy of life. We are not equal in intellect or gifts of many orders. We bulk differently. All history knows this and says it. But with our shadows comes absolute equality. We may all have the healing shadow. We may all grow a shadow which shall outminister ourselves. How like a blur of clustered suns this is! A prodigious shadow is what we may grow and leave as an inheritance to this world. I have seen it so very many times: men and women of no great parts—as accurate, observing observation knew—became so good and true and daylit as that what their ability was no man reckoned. All took note that they had been with Jesus. They exhaled precious spikenards. They walked along a lonely road and made it a highway which the angels frequented. They had a look of some far, fair country, and men became homesick for this land of light. They did not need to speak. Their shadows were eloquence-moving and tender.

They did not need to utter prayer. They were a prayer. When they were beside us we prayed wrought upon by their presence. They did not need to chide us for our lacks; we felt them because their shadows rebuked us.

How good this is for God to make a plain path of absolute equality for all our feet! No large wit, no wide reading, no far travel, no sainted parenthood—none of these are necessary in this new, strange, and very beautiful democracy of Jesus Christ our Lord.

The healing shadow should bring to every heart a healing beyond words. We become so consequential beyond all limitations. Great days are in store for us. High things come flying like birds to our windows. The most inconspicuous life may have no need for an archangel's golden trumpet. That life has its own instrument of music so that there are no longer the highly favored and the little favored; but only the elect of God may have shadows that can write a musical score which the angels of God shall render on their glorious trumpets, the shadow-music of eternal life.



## PRAYER

How precious to our hearts is this Apocalypse of God! How radiant our way is which we singingly take with never a faltering step. It is broad daylight and we see far. All those old pagan darknesses where wandered the sons and daughters of our race so long, so pitifully long, are now a shabby memory. Now we see Thee in Him. He is thy character; and all those things that dreamful prophets at vast hazard called out in their night scarcely crediting their own words, we know are truth but only adumbrations as compared with the Wonder and the Glory and the Beauty and the Salvation that Thou art.

With all that is within us we bless thy holy name, and worship Christ, who leans to us, prone at his feet, and whispers, "Ye seeing me have seen the Father." And it sufficeth us this hour and for eternity. Amen.

## II

### THE IMPENITENT CHRIST

“Which of you convinceth me of sin?”—*John 8. 46.*

THIS saying always makes me afraid. I think it is as terrible as the resurrection, and I know nothing that will make the face white so soon as the resurrection morning. And the reason it does is because it displays out in the open a terrific power we did not know existed. And this calm saying of the calm Christ to the effect that he is sinless, and consequently impenitent, makes a man halt and grow silent. It is hard to talk about so mighty a matter as this; and the solitary defense I offer in my own behalf is that it is the solemn service a preacher is bound to render to talk sometimes when he would love to be silent, and to talk oftentimes about things that are sky heights above his little stature.

Now, this calm assumption of Jesus that he is not a sinner will take hold of the wrists of any thoughtful mind and twist them till it must come to your knees. We have known egotists in history. There are not a few of them. Their voices are easily detected. They always talk about themselves. It is often not a large talk, but they rejoice in it. And we know the egotists

frankly well. But there never has been an egotist so colossal out of all them, great as they are, that would have claimed that he never was a sinner. I think representative egotists, so far as a moment's observation of them may be concerned, may be named as follows: Goethe, Napoleon, and Herbert Spencer. Those men seem to be simply masters of art in the unvaried realm of egotism. Napoleon Bonaparte did not care whether there were morals or not, but simply tramped over them to get up high. Napoleon Bonaparte was careless whether hell or heaven existed, one or both, so he could tramp through either or both, so as to get up to where he kinged it over the world. The earth was Napoleon to him. He was the earth to himself.

Goethe was a consuming egotist. He never thought about morality at all. He was very fine in his intellectual touch, but very, very coarse in his moral touch. He couldn't see blackness; he was color blind, this Goethe, to sin, and to indecency. He could do indecent things and speak about them, and laugh, and think here was a joke. That is all. The coarse man never discriminates between indecencies and jocularities. Then Herbert Spencer—I do not think his moral faculty was atrophied. It doesn't occur to me in reading Herbert Spencer's autobiography that he ever had one. I don't say that he did not; but he gave no symptoms of it. When Herbert Spencer is around I am always gelid. I feel like

I am near the north pole. There is not a man in literature that to me puts icebergs into my blood so quickly as Herbert Spencer. His calm assumption of surprising superiority, his hopeless incognizance of divine things, puts me at zero in a second. Now, nobody who knows these men can doubt for a moment that their egotism was colossal enough for anything. Herbert Spencer is always inviting the world to come and feel of his pulse. I don't want to. I prefer to choose a pulse. But he always said: "Step up and feel my pulse. Don't you want to see how it feels?" Napoleon said: "I am going up. Don't you want to see me go?" Goethe said: "I am up. Don't you want to see how high I am?" Well, they were egotists enough, unconscionable egotists, but none of them would ever have said, "I have had no commerce with sin." They wouldn't talk about it at all. Or, if they had been brought to face it, they would have faltered and said, "Let's talk about other matters." And here is a Man who talked of himself, of his own volition, up to this great sane matter, and said, "Which of you can say that I have sinned?"

Well, supposing, then, we say, for argument's assumption, that possibly and probably Christ was an egotist. Let us mark some egotists. Coleridge was an egotist. Sam Johnson was an egotist. Byron was an egotist. Rousseau was an egotist. We know the egotist's manner—some-

times less passionate and sometimes more, all times a personality who thought he had something in himself to divulge and didn't mind talking about it, though it is nothing much, and then keeps reiterating it, and who makes us very weary before the day is out, so much so that he puts us sick abed. But the quality of the egotist, as we know, is this—he is always thinking of himself and always talking about what he is thinking about. Jesus was always thinking about others and himself as related to the rehabilitation of others and the world. Now, that is a matter of observation any readers of the gospel can certify to. That Jesus talked about himself no one can deny. He had to, because he was the center; and he had to fix a center in order that life might know how to revolve. The sun, if it talked at all besides the talking of the daylights and noons and ruddy skies and glorious heights of air filled with flashing whiteness, would have to talk about itself. Why? Because it is full of itself? No; because the solar system is full of it. If the sun were to say anything to this earth of ours, it would have to say, "Keep close to me." Why? Why, because if the earth gets out of range of the sun, it will rush to ruin. The sun would have to talk about itself because itself is central, significant, and compelling.

Now, Jesus is here to get the world up to where the world should be and where the world must feel the tug of him. O sun, what doest thou?

And the answer of the sun is, "Getting my hands upon my planets." There is no safety in the planetary system except the sun have his hand upon the shoulder of each and all. And Jesus is to bring life back, uphill, to God. And he talks that. But I defy anybody here who has the thoughtful mood to read the sayings of Jesus, even a minute, to mistake what he hears as being the bickerings and the rasping voices of an egotist. Jesus never smoothed his garments down and glanced at himself in a glass and looked to see how he looked. He looked to see how the earth looked. Do you calmly think that anybody who ever heard Jesus talk would think that he was egotist or egotistical? Think you John thought it? Think you Peter thought it? Think you Judas Iscariot thought it, or Mary of Magdala thought it, or Martha the sister of Lazarus thought it, or Lazarus, coming out of the grave, thought it? Think you that? Didn't you know that while he spoke of himself he spoke of himself as related to us? "I am the light of the world; therefore, people who want daylight, here it is." He wasn't inviting people to look at him, but authentically inviting people to live in him; and he said people who want death rather than life stay far from me, but such as want life rather than death stay near to me; and his arguments were never for self-gratulation, but his arguments were eternally for the heartening of the world and that dark valleys might have daylight, and



that those who ran might read when the book was far from their eyes.

Did you ever hear Jesus pray? Now, praying is the going out of what is inmost to the soul. That is praying. Praying always is the intense-ness of souls becoming vocal. Did you hear Jesus praying? And if you did, did you mark that the sweat upon his face was the sweat for other folk? Not for him. Did you observe the longing in his face, which was like anguish set to music? Did you mark that that longing was for other people? Did you hear him praying when the twelve were near, and when Lazarus was dead, and he was about to call him from the silence of the tomb? If you heard Jesus praying, you know Jesus was not an egotist. Not a symptom of it is in him. If you heard him talking to the woman at the well about the water which if the thirsty lip got a drop like the dewdrop on it, it was thirsty for more, and that water which, if one have, there is no desert where thirst can reach him with its pang. And he talked about that. When he said, not in valley or by hill, not in graveyard or in throbbing city street, shall people worship God, but only where people want him there will they get him, does that sound like egotism? And I will insist that no considerate reading of the life of Jesus and of his sayings—to see them and hear them and feel them—is possible without knowing that here is a man

who is as distant from egotism as the remotest star is from star. And this unegotistical Christ says, "I will defy you to show wherein I ever sinned."

Now, my next consideration is this: that by how people feel toward sin by that we gauge what sort of folk they are. In other words, sensitiveness to sin always is certificate of character to a soul. People who are made out of leather say there is no sin. People that are of fine-fibered quality and to whom the soot of life is somewhat black say, "I shall die with my sin." Now, anybody who says it is only the worst folks who have the gash of the sin sword at them never read big books nor see big people nor live with big souls. I will say that of them. People who suffer from sin the most are not the worst people; not at all. They are the best people. You say it is not fair. O well, that is according to the meaning of "fair." If you think denseness of any sort gives ease, you are quite right; but I would rather be not quite so dense and a little more uneasy. Sole leather is not pricked by rose thorns, but I should rather be flesh and feel the hurt bleeding. Leather people don't feel anything. They are not accessible to wounds. They say they know more than the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and the rest. The minute you get to know something you stay down, out of regard to yourself, downstairs. You go in the cellar. If you don't know anything, you go on

the cupola and speak to the people downstairs in the street: "Here I am. You can come up some time and be as smart as I am." Dense people don't have hurts. No. If a person has no sensibility, you could tramp on his hands with swords on your heels and he would never know it. People whose flesh has petrified don't know it if you tramp on their hands. And people who are paralyzed don't notice. People that are vitalized—you step on their hands and the hands mash and bleed. Well, then, it is simply a question of how vital you are and how fine you are. If you have no æsthetic impulses, anything would satisfy you. You would just as soon have the smear the scene painters make for the theater's fix-up as to have a Rembrandt or a Millais, and you would never be troubled with daubs. Should we, rather, be unæsthetical, so as never to be troubled by the color of the paints? When we are dead we are not easy to hurt. When dead all the foul tongues could wag and we never know it: we are dead. But when alive you might never show it, yet like men whipped with sword blades you moan in the dark. To tell the truth, I don't at all covet the callousness of people who are simply thick-skinned and who don't know when they are threatened by peril or menace or shame. Not at all.

Sensitiveness is the price you pay for being fine. If you are not fine, you won't be hurt. But you people who say it is not fair that the

people who sin the least should suffer the most from sin must follow their logic on to the end and must know that by how much people are finest by so much are they hurt the easiest. You talk to an evil man about the Decalogue and he will whisper something when you are talking to him. He wouldn't notice. You say to some beautiful life, "Thou shalt not covet," and you and I would think his hands as clean of it as the face of stars are from dust, but he would wince under it. Why? Why, because he is so fine. What is the difference? Odds of difference—odds. It pays to be sensitive. It does, even if it hurts? Why, surely, surely.

Suppose I go and wash my hands with soap, and, having rendered them saponaceous, I say they are clean. But when the doctor comes and he wants me to help in some operation, he says: "Wash your hands."

Well, I say: "Doctor, I have. I have just washed them. They are as clean as ever."

"Ah," he says, "take some of this and wash your hands. I want them clean. We are going to do business now."

And he makes me wash in something to wash the microbes off. Can't a man even keep microbes? Must he be rid of them before he is clean? Now, my washing did very well for ordinary business, but when a man is going to handle flesh of other folks, then he must clean his hands. Ah, brothers, when a man or woman

gets close to God, then he knows that his hands are black, and puts them behind him—puts them behind him. Now, a person lacking in fineness will hold out his hand in the daylight and say: "I have clean hands." Why is it he does that? Dense; just dense. You say to a small boy, "Sonny, wash yourself."

He says, "I have."

"Come here," and you turn back his ears or turn them forward, and you lift up his chin and say: "Look there, and look at your hands. They are so dirty."

He didn't notice. He washed them. They are clean to him. But he is a boy; and cleanliness is not the specific virtue of a boy. The finest people are the most worried at sin, and I could stand here for hours together and show that the cleanest souls that have ever walked the ground of the world have been most appalled of sin. The thing that impresses me the most in David Livingstone's *Journals* in Africa is never what he found, never that he added a million square miles to the knowledge of mankind's geography, never that he did all this; that is all in the *Journal* which constitutes one of the most engaging pages in the history of lonely achievements. But the wonder of David Livingstone's *Journal* is that he is so aware that he is unclean. Did you hear him talking about himself not being fit for God? It tramps like chariot horses shod with iron. I will say that every good person who has marched to

manhood and womanhood and was neighborly to sanity has been ashamed of himself and has said, "I have sinned, I have sinned." And the man who has stood far off and put his hands on his eyes and then dropped his hands to his breast and then hammered on the breast of an easeless conscience within him and said as he looked down, "O Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," that is a man I will look up in heaven. He was not made out of brass; he was made out of spirit.

You know Saint Augustine—why, his book fairly teems with lightnings. Whose? His. Against whom? Against himself. Was it reverberant with praise of himself? No. Did John Bunyan praise himself? No. Did Martin Luther praise himself? No. Did John Wesley praise himself? No. Did Rutherford praise himself? No. Did Madam Guyon praise herself? No. Why not? Why, they were too fine-fibered. They said: "O God, forget a good deal and forgive the rest. Give me a chance." I think the lives of the great goodnesses of the world are so bewildering because the more cleansed you are the more incompetent you are to your own soul. Modesty is a passion of great souls, not a passion of leather people. Religious modesty is a passion of the religious and the holy and the sublime. And by reasoning, therefore, do we not discover that this religious Christ, if he have more sensitiveness, he must be utterly appalled by sin?



Well, was Jesus morally sensitive? Ah, you know, you can tell that by being with him. The centuries have found in Jesus the standard for fine life. You find me a fine body and I will find you somebody who has gotten Christ by heart. Mark you, some people have Christ at heart and then forget where they got their beauty. I think this is the grossest dishonesty I have seen. Men will take civilization from the hands of God and use it in all its beauty and then turn their backs on God and say, "I didn't see him make that." Well, clean lives will be the incarnation of the love of Christ's life. He was so sensitive that he was like the quick of the finger with the nail removed. Christ would not argue with sins. He went back of them and said, "Don't think them." He said murder is a good deal deeper in the soul than the stabbing of a sleeping man with a knife. He didn't say, "Don't carry the knife"; that would be like some of your shilly-shally reformers to say, "Don't carry the knife." The law says that. The law simply maintains decency. Don't carry the knife. Did Jesus say don't carry the knife? No. Did he say pull murder out of your heart? No, not that. What did he say? He said, "Pull out of your heart malice and hate." That is the sensitive Jesus. He did not leave matters to appearances, but he gathered life and reduced it. You show me an utterly beautiful woman and I will find you a woman who incarnates in her life the life,

the graciousness, and the ineffability of Jesus. Could you think of Jesus sitting around with crudeness? Perish that thought. When you have been with Jesus you know better. Do you think that covetous Judas would have counted the collection in Jesus' presence and say, "Didn't get so much to-day as yesterday"? Could you think that of Jesus? Would he let that transpire in his presence? No. Judas took the cash out and counted it, and Jesus wasn't around, and he said, "Won't get rich fast that way." But in Christ's presence he couldn't. Why? Christ was sensitive—and so fine.

Did Christ sin? Well, he said, "Which of you says that I sin?" There are two items which have sometimes been adduced as sin items in the character of Jesus. I name them but to pass them. Objectors have said that Jesus did a wrong when he cursed the fig tree because it had leaves and looked like it was doing business but had no fruit. Now, you know, brothers and sisters, the trouble with people who carp in that way is that they seem never to have been around where big thoughts run loose. It is such a pity to eternally want everything reduced to the little. You know when a boy is playing marbles in the street, if you should give him the dome of a capitol to play with, he wouldn't play with it because he couldn't fit it to his finger and thumb. Now, some people are eternally peremptory about having things

little enough. Let's have things as little as a marble. Now, such people, whatever they may or may not have been, cannot understand Jesus because they don't get within a million centuries' distance of him. What was Christ doing? Was he mad at the fig tree? That is what these fine ethicists say. Mad at the fig tree and cursed it? Ah, me, have we no more breadth of vision or skyline than that? Jesus had a lot of disciples with him who were slow men, and inept in spiritual matters. And Jesus went to get breakfast at the fig tree, and the fig tree deceived him, and Jesus calmly said, "There will be no figs on this bush." And when the disciples went by the next time the fig tree had withered away. What withered it? It disappointed God. That will wither anything. Disappointed God! What did he do with the fig tree? Made it an eternal parable of the people who disappointed God. They bear no fruit for any hungry life and wither away. That is all. Why, cannot God do with one of his own trees in his own way? I wonder now. Cannot God cut down the tree that doesn't bear fruit? Why, anybody could do that. Jesus said to the fig tree, "You are a sham, and shams had best be found out." I marvel at the people who haven't the perception to see the marvel of Jesus.

The next thing these ethical precisians say is that when Jesus drove the devils into the swine and then the swine drowned themselves, Jesus

appropriated other people's property. There was a man homeless and forlorn, and he was a man away from his family, dwelling in the graveyards. He couldn't be bound with chains; he could break fetters of brass. And they tried to make him a prisoner, and he broke all chains—he was that wild and fierce and fearful. And Jesus turned the devils out of him into where they belonged, among the swine that rooted in the dirt; and devils that were to run a man into death did the like with the swine. Now, I want to know how could the great Christ sin by that? And these ethical folk had best remember that God could well reserve himself the right to use property under condition.

It may happen once in a while, in the spring, down toward the Mississippi's mouth, that tracts of land they call plantations, with a thug like a sob, will slip into the Mississippi—plantation houses and plantation lands—and the Mississippi will roll over them. And God is all the while dispossessing people of things betimes and for high moral uses. I wonder what conceivable outcome would have been so unforgettable as that demon incident. O heart, mark that the man clothed in his right mind is at the feet of Jesus. That is what he did. May God teach the larger lesson? What is he going to do? What is he going to get rid of? Slavery. How will he do it? By writing a proclamation of emancipation? No. By letting the bluecoats cut the graycoats'

breasts? Listen! How many of them died ridding America of slavery? O, you say, a weary, weary, weary, numerous company of them. Did it pay? Yes, because slaves are free, centuries of them are free now. God reserves to himself the right to do the largest. Very well. These are trivial matters to interpose, but they are objections offered. It says this: You cannot find in Jesus a trespass on the domains of sin, and himself said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"

Brothers, sisters, here is a sinless Christ. What he said of himself the centuries have had to affirm. I do not say they wanted to, but they had to. If you take the career of Christ, you will need to set yourself sullenly to work to show a suggestion of sin on him, and with the rest of the people of the centuries you have got to set yourself blindly looking with your eyes opaque as dirt or else see them utterly smeared with sin.

Now, what comes out of this? This: There was once only a sinless man in our town. Who? Abraham? He was a sinner. Enoch? He was a sinner. Moses? He was a sinner. Isaiah? He was a sinner. Paul? He was a sinner. John? He was a sinner. Who is this? It is Christ. What is that he said? "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" "He was without sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." That is what Peter said, who lived with him, and that is what the centuries have said about him. "He was without sin, and guile was not found in his mouth."

O soul, take yourself by the throat now and hold yourself up to that. Who is he? All the men of the earth, I said, have been sinners, but here is a Man who said he was not a sinner, and we must in honor and with frankness hear him. Who is he? There is only one answer, and that is this: He is "God, manifest in flesh, full of grace and truth."

And if you thought for a moment that I was passing a road that needed not to be journeyed over, think you this: if Jesus is the Sinless One, then what Jesus said is so. If Jesus is impenitent, that is a sure sign Jesus was sinless, because the sensitive Christ would have been the first to have felt the twinges of conscience and the shame of sin. He was impenitent, and the sinless Christ is the impenitent Christ, and the sinless Christ is the God Christ, and a God Christ is sinless and a truth-teller, and therefore Christianity abides. For a sinless Christ tells all truth when he says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up." He says that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." He said, "He that drinketh of me shall never thirst." He said, "I am the bread of



life." He said, "I am the judge of the quick and the dead." He said, "Ye shall see me coming after while." Who is the Man, this sinless Body?

Do you wonder that a man's face is white and his hands grow tremulous and his breath comes short, as if he journeyed up among the highest altitudes? Who are you who never sinned? And he says, "Before Abraham was I am." He says, "I and the Father are one." He says, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." He says, "He that believeth on the Son hath life." O, Lord Christ, thou impenitent Christ! I worship thee. Thou art the God of the eternities. Thou art the resurrection and the life. Thou impenitent and lovable Christ, I put my face up to be wet with thy tears of blood.

PRAYER: O sinless Saviour, hallowed be thy name. I worship thee. Across the universe I would make my weary unlit way to find thee and thy salvation and hear thee say: "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Thou who wast sinless forgavest sins. It was like thee, and thou couldst.

Thou deathless sinlessness, minister to my heart thy abundant absolution so that I may go out from thy healing touch to sin no more, for thy voice is on my spirit as thy blood is on my heart, and thou dost bid me rise and go and sin no more.

Sinless Saviour, hallowed be thy Name. Amen.



## PRAYER

WE are looking for thee, our God. So much we may say for ourselves as we kneel to pray. We are looking downward with closed eyes, but all our glance is skyward. All things we conceive are to be seen looking up. Where the sky climbs are spaces where we dimly know all things are hidden which we in our major moods want to discover. All things hidden are hidden afar and on high.

We want continents. Archipelagoes do not satisfy the ocean sweep of our personalities. We are ocean-bound, and in those wastes of waters some places lie not only the Islands of Hesperides, but somewhere lies the Vast Continent where we feel ourselves inhabitants. God is our Continent. He is where we want to live and must live if we live worthily. We want him. We surge his way. We would vainly outrun the hasting stars to come to him and see him face to face.

And so when we make this sublime venture we meet Christ. Whenever we are outward bound, whenever we are caught in the sweep of illimitables, there and then we meet him. His voice is on us. His "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" is the Voice we have eaged for all our lost years. He is thou. We worship him because we must worship thee.

We bless thee thou hast sent him, and bless him that he has come. Thy will to have him come and his will to come are one. He is here and thou in him art here.

How high and clear thy sky seems to us now and will evermore! The seeing is good and the going is good. So clear the sky is seeing thou art the sky. Stars do not suffice us. We want the sun.

### III

## GOD'S CHARACTER

"Who being . . . the express image of his person."—*Heb. 1. 3.*

ONCE only in the New Testament and once only in the entire Bible does the word "character" occur. This is odd when you consider that the Bible, the New Testament in particular, has done more to create and maintain character than any book of the ages, and, speaking with meekness of spirit, one is yet compelled to say, than all books of all the ages. As regards man, the exuberant word of this Bible-book is "character." The theme is ever that, changing in tints and heavenly tones, like a sunset sky, yet is the topic, ever for man, character. It has put that word into the world's blood. You cannot converse about our modern life the briefest while without by implication or explication thrumming on that mainstring—character. The world is run by character *now*. It was not so aforetime. Then it was run by power. The biggest brute owned the jungle. Now, in the face of all torrents of battle, we may still perceive that the actual combat is not a gun-battle, but a character-

battle. What does the world out of the fight think of the world in the fight? is the question which all belligerency must learn to face. And it is easier to face bayonet, shell, and liquid fire than to face that. Character is emerging from this clarion of volcanoes. When the smoke, lava, scorïæ, earth shock, like clouds in scud, pass, like a tall mountain, serene and wonderlit, at the last will climb into eternal observation—character.

Character is is-ness. Not the paraphernalia, but the self. Not externals only, but spirit, and mainly spirit; howbeit not spirit solely, but spirit at work, like climbing saps, to build the trunk of life and eventuate in leaf and bloom and fruit, and music of the wind at dawn or storm. The sure reliance we have in ourselves, in what we are, our dependableness. The mountain against which we put our backs when the battle charges at us with its wildest ferocity—that is character. To get at ourselves is the supreme adventure and the supreme arrival, including in that thought the self being a thing worth while.

The New Testament may be named the textbook on character, yet mentions that word but once, and then not as touching us, but touching Him, not as touching man, but as touching God. "The character of God's person" is a vasty phrase which shines forth a vasty fact.

In the King James Version of the Bible this word "*χαρακτήρ*" is rendered "express image"; in the American Revised Version it is translated

"very image." Now, if we shall bring the Greek word thus rendered across bodily, we shall be confronted with a blaze of very special glory, a blaze which shall not blind but illuminate. Our word "character" is a bodily importation from the Greek, one word with which we have not tampered as our language does with so many of its verbal acquisitions and borrowings.

Christ is God's character. This talk is about God, not about man. And still is the talk about God in this Bible ever eventually talk about man. The Bible is a room opening wide windows in two directions, one window opening on God, the other window opening on man. God getting at man, man getting at God, is the solitary though dual theme of this noble and notable Bible-book. That is what makes it so noble, so notable, so isolated in unapproachable splendor. God wants to get at man; man needs to get at God. The supreme love of God is hungry to get at man; the betterness and bestness in man is famishing to get at God. God is saying to man, "I am here; come." Man is saying to God, "Thou art there; I come."

If a man is to achieve character, how shall he achieve it? "Let him grow it," says some other-wise soul, "as he does the oaks and the apple trees and the corn fields, and the wheat. Let him plant and tend." This sounds so sensible, but is so senile. We have had our Confucius, our Mencius, our Marcus Aurelius, our Seneca,



our Plato-men come over and come out. We know. They did not come very far, and they did not come out at all. The jungle defeated them. They were Emersonians in their fine and fluid phrases, but not a vine in their vineyard ever bore grapes a second year. They had to nurse their vines, and we know nursed vines do not constitute the vineyards of the world.

We cannot grow character. Character, in the widest view, as regards its origin, is an exportation, and as regards its destination, an importation. We do authentically grow character in our fields, but it is after we have got the graft from heavenly fields. We have a word "export," the passing out, and a word "import," the passing in; but what we need in this sublime business of character is a word indicating the sending down, namely, the importing downward. Will *katabasis* suffice—"the marching down"—with the other word of battle swiftly following, *anabasis*—"the battling up"? Christ, we here read, is the "character" of God's person.

Character, namely, earthly character, must be looked at not by casting the eyes down, but by casting the eyes up. So do we behold the features of God and the cross of God that climbs on every high horizon of this world. We perceive character, not by looking at "Abraham, the friend of God," but at God, the Friend of Abraham. We cannot farm alone. We must get seed to answer to the soil. The richest fields lie sterile until we bring

the seed; and the seed-fields of the earth are all located in the skies. By the light of the far, high sun do we walk on the ground, and by the light of the Highest Sun do we walk unstumbling in the valley of the shadow of death.

It is all a huge and beautiful mystery, this commerce between terrestriality and celestuality. "Whence comes life?" is the quite staggering question science has been putting to itself all my lifetime, and up to now it mumbles the same question, like somnambulistic speech. There is only one reply which can possibly be valid. Life comes from behind those hills where thunder sleeps. Life cometh from the calm of God. We have become farmers by celestial agriculture. Crops must come back and up to the hill country. The valleys of man do not hold the secret of the world. The hill country named Calvary is where the secret of the world is hid. Behind the stars very far is where we must push our ship if we shall come to our desired haven. Mariners steer their ships by stars. Man steers his soul by God. Who desire to amass that unfragile riches called character must raise their eyes to Christ who is "the character of God."

"Behold, I show you a mystery." We are clad in mystery, as the hills are clad in light, yet are we clad withal comfortably. The garments, if majestic, fit us well, for are they not also the garments of mercy and of God?

Whoso will grow character must look at Christ.

There seems to be no other way. Apparently, all the other ways have been tried and have proven too circuitous, too prolonged, too dangerous. Too many Sloughs of Despond lurk along the road where Mr. Fearing, as John Bunyan said, was matured to full growth. The stumbling places were too many, the light too dim. Sea marshes and the mountain mists made ill climate for the soul. Voices grew muffled, footsteps were invisible, the path could not be identified, though a body crawled on hands and knees. This way loitered so that life was finished ere the journey was well under way; while such as made a measurable success could leave no paths which others could take.

The footpath of blood was requisite. Christ needed to walk that way. He did. The Christ of God tramped barefoot here and hath thereby made indelible a path for the feet of coming pilgrims. The Comforter's House is on this road and the chamber whose name is Peace.

"The character of his Person" has given broad daylight in which to walk. We failed so utterly on what character was that we grew inconsolable. We were as those bereft. The great Companion was not dead, but had never been born, is how the matter stood. Character was more a mummy than a man. It was a corpse which, when touched by the lightning's finger, grows gymnastic and grotesque and creates terror. Supernatural might is serene and glad as sunup when the swallows fly.

Even our shoes must be of celestial make. "Shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"—that makes walking good. And we must walk. We do not fall into character. We toil up hill, we climb; and climbing is done by feet; but, as the story of mankind has demonstrated, not quite by bare feet, but by shod feet; and the heavenlies must make our shoes for us. Our lowliest equipment for the character enterprise is from heaven. The hortatory seems to be "Look at the character of God's person and ascend."

All books of character, when wisely written, are at deep concern about the shape, the magnitude, the vast cosmic outlines of character. Whence comes our definitive information as to what ultimate character should be? Who knows the mind of this business must follow "the gleam" (my soul, hast thou read, then, and recently, Alfred Tennyson's "Merlin and the Gleam"? If thou hast not, I rebuke thee openly, thou art remiss in a noble matter. Read that poem through upon thy knees, with prayer and it may be, in tears), but what gleam shall we follow? Gleams be many. Some are the glowworm's lamp, some the firefly's glow, some the ignis-fatuus fire, which is rottenness striking a light. Denominate the gleam. Get for me the common denominator of the soul's gleam. These lights mislead, and, besides, they flicker so and there is no path where they burn. I need a lamp; and certainly my lamp must be lit by God.

God is character. How-he-is, is my goal. I struggled upward unto him. He is my destination. "O, that I knew where I might find him!" that yearned and sobbed long years ago out of one of the bravest souls that ever drew breath and lifted prayer. Because it was so hard to know the character of God, which was the eventual thing for humanity to aspire unto, God stepped out of doors into the full blaze of spring daylight and let men look at "his character." The name of that High revelation was Christ. Christ was "the character of his person." Soul, lift thy hallelujah. Out of thick darkness God has stepped into that light which never was on land or sea.

So is this business of men's souls simplified. Character need not search for the path any more. Christ is here. We are to be like God! "Be ye holy, for I am holy," saith the Lord. How holy is this Lord? We cannot see him in the privacy of eternity. Then God stepped into time. He made descent. He came near my house. He lingered, walking slowly, and then—came in. His name was Christ. At eventide he broke bread and was known unto us in the breaking of bread. He stayed all night. We saw out in the open how God looked.

But we saw God's looks, the real thing, not a picture, not an imaginary sketch, but in the light we looked upon the lineaments of God, since which time casuistry has not needed to

babble and the philosophical prattler might hold his peace nor vex the air with his discordant sounds. We saw character in his full bright light. But not blinding. It was diffused, gentle, tempered to our sight, fitted to our school-boy perceptions. Glorious, yet not affrighting. This Character's name was Christ.

And his name is Christ, Christ-God. We have seen the Father, and it sufficeth us. Christ is not the picture of God; Christ is the very character of God. We look at him and our life begins its jubilee. We cease arguing what character is and begin toilingly to possess it.

Those tapestry weavers long ago sat behind the tapestry to weave it. We sit in front of Christ to weave the tapestry called character, and we weave it before our face—and his. We know the pattern is perfect and stumble toward it. Great stumblers we; yet, stumbling toward the character of God, we shall on some elect day, cloud or shine, come into the presence of God; and with laughter like the chime of bells we shall call out, "Home!"

## PRAYER

OUR ever blessed Master, we love thee with a renewed affection. We count our lives in all their rounds of activities and emotions with reference to thyself. Always our hearts turn to thee as the sunflower to the sun. We would never leave thee nor forsake thee. The leap of our hearts is always toward thyself. How fair thou art to our hearts, how strong thou art in our intellections, how thou dost sweep over our souls like the wash of wild and salt sea waves, and in the drench of thyself is health and healing and delight. We become all new. Vast vigors are in our blood when thy blood has washed our hearts. "Thou, O Christ, art all I want"—even so runs the ritual of our spirits. If we stray from thee, to what worthy goal can we think to come? Thou art not only on the road to all good things, but thou art the Road to all good things. Keep our feet on that Road, O Christ, and we shall rest content in thee. Amen.



## IV

### MYSTERY A CREDENTIAL OF CHRISTIANITY

My theme is, "Mystery a Credential of Christianity," and my text is in the Book of First Timothy, the third chapter and the sixteenth verse, the words being as follows: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness."

And is there, then, mystery in godliness? Certainly. How else? God is the climax of mystery; he is the architect of the world; he contrives the system in which we are; everything that God has made is in so far like him that everything he has created is like himself, mysterious. Now, a good many people make much of the mysteriousness of Christianity. They feel, or have schooled themselves to feel, that the mystery that enshrouds Christianity is a justifiable cause for the rejection of the Christian system.

Now, Christianity is all those appliances which God makes use of to make people like he is. We ourselves are mysterious; he himself is super-mysterious. That system of movements by which the great God tries to widen our life till it grows beautiful and wide like his life, who among all

of you, when you come to the matter with coherent, deliberate, manly, devout thinking, can suppose it should be different in mystery from the profoundest things of the universe of God?

There are three things I design by God's help this morning to bring to your consideration: one is, mystery adds zest; another is, mystery in life is no prevention of belief in the facts of experience; the third is, that mystery in itself is a good reason why we ought to believe that Christianity came from God.

Now, anything we understand, we are done with. The reason why a great many of the arts of ordinary trade are not adducing and conducing to intellectuality is because we understand them; no thought is required, no tribute is laid on the imagination; and where imagination sleeps, intellectualization dies: we do our deed automatically, we write our account, we dig in our garden, we hoe in our fields, we plow in our domain, and these things requiring no overt act of thoughtfulness on our part, but running automatic-wise, our mind may dwarf what time we do the things. We don't take any delight in the spelling books we used to enjoy after our fashion. We don't care for the primer books we used to read, for the sole reason we understand them; we have gotten from them all the life they had to offer. It is as if we talked with a man who knew only one word; who was tongue-tied in speech, whose vocabulary consisted of one word and that a

monosyllable: I will not care to talk with him, he cannot elaborate argument, he cannot champion opinions, he cannot attach my attention, he cannot convoke an assembly of superior powers; he lacks, because I understand all he can do. Now, the moment anything is comprehended that moment it becomes detachable. As soon as I comprehend any single fact I know that fact no more in the working tools of my life. There isn't anything we come to deal with but what, when we understand all about it, we do in thought put it aside. There isn't anything that compels consideration, that awakes aspiration and attention, that calls for an electrified consideration on our part—not one thing but what, in itself, is as deep and mysterious as the deep seas are unfathomable by the stone which the child holds in its hand and leans over the taffrail of a swift steamer and throws into the blue surface of the water.

You don't object to a poet because you cannot comprehend his genius, do you? Because you are not shrewd enough to understand the intuitional mechanism by which the superb faculties in him begin to maneuver and the bewildering shuttles begin to play, you don't affect his verse to have no attraction for you. The reason why you like to tamper with poets is because you do not understand them. I have here two books. There is written on the title page: "——— James Whitcomb Riley." If you could talk with

Mr. Riley, if you should say to him, "How do you make poetry?" he will tell you, won't he? No. One time I stopped him on the street corner, and asked him certain things about his poetry—clandestinely, you understand; I thought if I could catch his way, I could swing off his verse, but he didn't tell. Just in the suavest, blandest way I could muster, I asked him about his poetry; I asked him a lot, and he didn't tell me a syllable. He was as bland as I was, he was as courteous as I was, *plus*, but he did not tell me one thing. He wasn't quite sure which was his best poem. I was. He could not tell how the inspirations came once and vanished: he could not tell how themes came to him—he could not tell. He could not tell where he got his ink that was bottled sunlight. He could not tell whence he gathered the odors he hath pressed in his books like rose leaves to stay with perfume forever. But do you think, because he could not tell me how he contrived his poetry, that I lost interest in his poetry and in him? Why, if he could have opened the book of his genius, and told me all the gyrations of his mind, if he had shown me all the scintillations of his poetic ability, I should have lost interest in him; I could have contrived after his fashion; but he did not know how he did it, and he could not tell how.

Some people can always tell best what they don't know. I have known some people who were perfectly voluble, like a tumultuous river

when the spring rains were swelling it, and they talked immensely when they talked about things they were as ignorant of as a cow is of society or astronomy; but when it came to things they knew about they were as mum as oysters. The only possible consideration under which they could become spontaneous in their discussion was when they knew nothing whatsoever, and could not contradict themselves, because they had no thesis to maintain.

Genius cannot tell its secret. It does not know it, and if it did, it could not tell it, because there is no vocabulary qualified to do the deed. If I read a poem from Riley, will you understand how he wrote it? You will not. You are thoroughly acquainted with him; you have neighbored with him many years; when you go to his house on Lockerbie Street, you knock at the door—which I think to be one of the signs that you are on approachable and intimate terms; you don't clang at the doorbell like any other tramp; you don't ring the bell like any other friend; you knock at the door; they know you personally and they come to the door, and they let you in—you are friendly at that house. Are you so friendly that you go and knock three or four raps, and he comes to the door and says: "Well, now, come in and stay awhile. Don't be in a hurry; I'm glad to see you"? If you are never so familiar with him, can you understand how he did these things? You cannot. There

is not a man in all this company that can explain such considerations as those. I will have you explain the mechanism of the genius whereby he brought the things to pass.

Did you ever read a book called *King Lear*? Did you try to find out about a man called Shakespeare? And did you reread *King Lear*, and did you find out about Shakespeare, and did you read it once more and try to find out more about Shakespeare? Why, nobody ever found out about *King Lear*; the bewildered faculties could not understand the character, nor the one who contrived it because the contriver is always greater than the thing contrived. No mechanism is as big as the machinist. No ship is ever, in brain and bulk, like the man from whose fertile intellect the thing sprang to toil across the seas and hammer the passing waves down. Why, do you know, nobody understands *King Lear*.

Do you quit reading *King Lear* because you do not understand how it was contrived? Do you quit giving attention to Shakespeare because the lips of the secrets of his genius are as silent as the Sphinx? No: you love him most because you comprehend him least. Is not that the truth?

Why is womanhood enchanting?—I appeal to womanhood because it is the most bewildering study God has given us. Now, I take it for granted that every man knows he does not understand womanhood, and, after living many years, I am of opinion that womanhood does not under-

stand herself. She will not say she does not, she will look astute, and, strange to affirm, will say nothing. She does not understand woman any more than you imagine you do; she does not understand herself any better than you do. She knows what she does; but she does not know what she will do next. That is the reason why every woman is delightful: neither she nor you nor any other creature knows what conceivable thing she will conceivably do next. You ask her why a woman in her natural attitude stands against women and for men, and she cannot tell you. She says she does not, but she does; and the more she says she does not, the more you understand she does. If you ask a mother why she favors her boys more than her girls, she will say she does not, but she does; it is the sex instinct, and the girls say, "Now, mama, I know you love Charlie better than me!" And you ask her why she criticizes the girl for doing things for which she would not condemn the boy, and she cannot tell you for her life. You ask her why, when she has a son at her house, she is on the defensive against every other woman, and she cannot tell; but there never was a woman that had a son beloved that didn't want to keep every other woman's arm away from him, and she resented any other woman being around; and she would look out of the window when her boy came rollicking home from school, and a strange, vindictive look would steal into her eyes, and she



would think, "There isn't a girl in the world fit for my son!" Would it do any good to try to find out why this is so? No, it would not. Women don't know, and nobody else knows. Does anybody know why? You have studied women, my man friend, and you are a good deal interested in the subject; and, indeed, it is a very fascinating and charming subject. We never get too much of it. The more we know them the more we like them; God bless womanhood forever; bless her for her clean sphere and wondrous life. But do you lose interest in her because you cannot understand her? No! You just go at it again. You say, "Goodness me, if I had known what you wanted, I would have gotten it for you." When you ask a woman what she wants, she says, "I should think you'd *know*." How in the name of sense does she think "you'd know"? You are in love with a woman, but you don't understand her, do you? But just go right on courting her. That is it, just go right on. The more you don't understand her the more you like her. In other words, the mystery in her does not preclude interest in her; it stimulates interest. If women could understand men as well as they think they do, they would lose interest in them. But women don't understand men altogether.

In other words, the mystery of life stimulates interest; and I want to know by what sort of philosophy (seeing all things about us that are germane to your thinking, are impressive to you

in proportion to their power of stimulation, and seeing stimulation belongs to things in proportion to their mystery)—I want to know how you think Christianity is going to be like a book of one word, like a primer book? If Christianity were understood by everybody, it would be like a stream whose shallows were its depths and whose depths were its shallows.

There is a flower that grows in the ice fields of the Alps. It hath the bluebell flower. The flash of its beauty is like the light when pressed against the green ice field. When the spring draws near you shall find, as you go along the glacier edge, what seems a drift of solid ice, but looking closely, you will perceive there are hundreds of these blue flowers growing in the ice. We can understand how they might be there when the ice is gone, but these blue flowers reach up their heads and grow through the solid ice. You cannot understand how the campanula flower grows there, but don't you care to go and look at it? You will spend hours looking at the mystery of the thing.

Christianity is that flower in life. It grows in glacier rim; it grows where everything hinders it; it grows when antagonism opposes it. It grows. Its mystery is marvelous; it comes when the winter is on and grows through the winter; it not only holds its blooms aloft like the everlasting verdure of the pine trees, but it grows in the drift snows and grows through them. Don't you

know that Christianity braves the icy winter, and burning summers, and angry burning furnaces? Don't you know that Christianity walks into the furnace and through it, and comes out with never the smell of fire upon its garments, much less a blister on the hand or face? It is the supernatural glory of Heaven, and you must not think to understand it; and because you do not understand it is no sign it is not of superlative interest to you and is superlative truth. Rather it ought to have your glad attention; all the power and all the ardor of your life ought to run out toward this thing with supreme zest.

My second contention shall be that if Christianity is mysterious, that is in no regard anything against its credibility. We are in a world where mystery employs us. We are where we won't understand anything that God does. If you refrained from eating until you understood how food supplied the nerve force, you would die of starvation; anemia would come to you and end in death: if you didn't breathe until you understood how the blood became oxidized by the breath, you would die of suffocation; if you didn't use your eyes until you understood how light is accessory to the eyes and the eyes to light, you would die blinded. I appeal to this company. You don't dally with anything else like you dally with Christianity. You don't deny facts because they are mysterious. You don't drive Truth out of doors because you do

not understand her or her garments or her language. But when Christianity comes, and with *pierced* hand, knocks at the gateway of your life, you say, "Your language is unknown, your utterance is jargon." What I appeal for, beloved, before God who is your God and who is the God of life, is, common fairness with Christianity. I understand that Christianity is mysterious, but that ought not to prevent your receiving it. You receive every other mystery; why will you turn the Redemption of the soul out of doors? Why should you do it? I claim that while my argument may seem to mean naught, it means much when I say that when all other things are mysterious, and you refuse Christianity because it is mysterious and receive every other fact despite its mystery, you are illogical, and your doubt can never stand before a common bar of common justice, much less before the uncommon bar of the uncommon judgment of an uncommon God.

There is a yellow spot in the eye called Sommering. It is called Sommering because it was discovered by an old German physician whose name the spot now bears. What relation that spot has to vision these centuries have been trying to discover, but we have not altogether ascertained. The theory is that this yellow spot sustains the same relation to the fact of sight as a yellow glass would in a photographer's gallery. If you intercept the sun's rays by a yellow glass

in a photographer's gallery, the room will be filled with light and heat, but there is no actinic action; so that there will be no effect upon a sensitized plate, for chemical action has been abolished. Now, the presumption is that the yellow spot in the eye sustains a like relation to sight; so that light and heat may come in through the optic nerve, and the optic nerve not be destroyed. Now, because you do not understand one or the other cause, do you refuse to receive the help that may come from it? You don't. There is not a man or a woman that does.

Because you do not understand heat, do you refuse to warm your hands? Because you do not understand in what regard summer's heat differs from stove heat, you don't refuse it, do you? Do you say that coal is bottled-up sunlight? You do. That is what Stevenson, years and years ago, said. I will ask you this question: if sun's heat is stored up in coal, how does it occur that coal heat and sun heat don't act the same way? Sun heat comes in through windows, and coal heat is kept in by windows. Man, explain that. Woman, so voluble in other things that you can tell them off like beads upon a string, tell that. You warm your house with coal heat; you have your windowpanes there to shut the heat in. If you open your windows, your house is never warm—it may not be that, any way; but in any case, the windows are for the purpose of keeping coal heat in: but you

don't think you will keep sun heat out by having windows, do you? The sun heat comes in through the windows, the same as if practically carried by the glass in the windows. You don't understand the one or the other.

You know, if a stove is in the room, and the day is very cold and the room is very large, most of us want to get pretty near the stove. But, you know, the farther away from the stove you are the less heat you will get. Now, we are ninety millions of miles away from the sun, and the coldest day that ever blisters the earth with its frigidity you can stand at your window and hold your hands nigh the panes, when the day is clear, and warm your hands, and feel the flames come from ninety million miles to warm you. Do you explain that? You don't. No more do the flowers explain it; but they lift up their hands to it, and are warmed; they lift up their lips to it and are kissed; they lift up their buds to it, and all sorts of strange aromas are mixed with their sap; they lift up their leaves to it, and all sorts of beauteous colors come and leave their impress there so long as the flower's life lasts. You do receive heat from the sun even if you don't understand it.

Do you think there is a chemist on the earth that could take a seed he didn't know anything about and put it in his laboratory, and tell what sort of flower would grow from it, or what sort of cereal it would produce, or what sort of tree

would come out of that poor seed, what sort of foliage would be there? There is not a chemist on the earth that can tell a thing about the plant from the seed; he cannot put it in his laboratory and explain its mysteries and marvels: but I tell you, no seed, in all its relations, is so strange as the unread secrets of the things of Christ. You plant seeds, and you don't understand how they fall into the ground, and the frost comes, and they germinate, but you plant them in the providence of God, and by and by you have flowers to send to the sick, and they press them to their lips or lay them on their pillow. So Christianity implanted in the heart bears flowers and fruits of righteousness, and you don't understand how.

You don't understand the human voice. You do not understand how the voice goes through solid wire. You stand at your telephone with the receiver at your ear, and your mouth to the tube, and talk a thousand miles away; and your voice, poor, impalpable thing that cannot be heard upstairs, goes a thousand miles away, and they hear its intimate inflections. Explain it? *You cannot do it!* How can the voice get through solid wire you cannot say any more than you can explain how light gets through glass.

You don't understand why electricity stays on wire and won't go on to glass—why some things are attractive to electricity and some things are not attractive to it. You cannot explain one



single fact of human life. You cannot understand the potency of anybody's soul. Do not, therefore, affect to turn God away from your door, and put the gospel out because you do not understand Christ. I beg you to believe that Christianity is mysterious; but everything with which life has to do, and all the dealings of your spirit, are mysterious. You believe in gravitation. You have been talking gravitation all these years, you know a great deal about it—or nothing; you say that Sir Isaac Newton discovered it; you tell what you think of the theory, but you don't understand one poor syllable of the fact. You know the sun holds the world, yet you walk between the sun and the world. You know that the world is wheeling a thousand miles an hour, but you don't know why it doesn't wheel off its path. The sun is reaching out his colossal hand to bridle the world, bidding it speed no faster and no farther, but you cannot understand that: no hand is visible, no might is apparent. Oh, God's sun is holding God's world, and yours, and mine. We don't understand its mystery.

Now, when it comes to the matter of religion, people say, "I don't understand Christ." I think you don't! If you thought you did, you would be colossal in your folly. Nobody understands Christ, save the Christ himself. But I will ask you this thing: do you understand one human soul? You have neighbored with your

own little child from the day it was born and cried in your arms, and your spirit laughed with exceeding great joy, until these days when the lad has grown to manhood. Do you understand that soul? Do you understand why little boys play with tops and marbles and guns, and little girls jump ropes and have dolls and dishes for playthings? Nobody does. God is the only Person that does. One is a boy and the other isn't; one is a girl and the other isn't—that is the difference. There are things hidden in the mystery of the soul that we call sex so bewildering as that nobody has touched them. Your wise man may have a theory of heredity, but no wise man, no Darwin, no Spencer, can understand how it comes to pass that qualities of soul enter into the very constitution of the spirit as well as into brawn and bone and flesh and bones. You do not understand your child's life. Some parents know less about their own children than about any other thing.

You don't understand how life lives, how the muscle thrives, do you? You don't understand what relation physicality has to metaphysicality, do you? What relation psychology and physiology have? No. You don't understand, if the silver cord be loosed, why the soul goes out on the tide and is borne by the waves and tides and winds into the infinite unknown and comes back no more; but the fact still lives. I say Christ is the great Unfamiliar because he is the

emporium of facts: but so far as understanding him, you understand him just as well as you understand your own soul and the souls of the people about you. You cannot turn Christ away when you have got little children at your house. You don't understand Christ, but you don't understand anybody else.

Deal fairly with Christ. My plea is for a fair hearing for the great heavenly mysteries and mercies of human life and destiny; that we people, who have got to live, and who by and by must also die, that we look these great truths in the eyes and do not wince. If you wince, still look. If your fear comes, and you shiver with your fear, still look.

Do you believe in miracles? You say I do not understand miracles; you understand miracles just as much as you understand nature. Who is nature? What do you know about nature? Do you understand why it is that a person grows as big as he is, and doesn't get any bigger? Can you answer why it is that when your hand is cut, and no other processes are used, eventually your tissue builds up to the same as it used to be? Can you tell me when beast flesh or human flesh is wounded how nature tends not to slay, but how all natural force tends to heal? God's nature is the great physician. God is the Great Physician, and nature he hath made a great physician also. Nature is like a physician or a nurse in whose medicine case all remedies seem

to be hid, if only we could come to find out how to use them. You cannot understand miracle, I grant you, but you cannot understand life. I believe in miracle, because I believe in God. When I sever my belief in miracle it will be when I sever my belief in God. Everything depends upon how big your God is. If you have a poor, nondescript God, you will have no miracle. If you have a great God, omnipotent in function and service, you will likely have miracle. You do not understand how Christ walked on the sea; neither do you understand how Napoleon with his cannon could walk, and his troops could walk, across the frozen river—you cannot understand it, I say, any more than how Christ walked on the water, and I reckon that He who built bridges across continental seas with ice, I reckon he can build a highway for his feet across the tossing billows of the Galilee. I tell you, miracle is as natural and legitimate in its sphere and relation as any natural fact; and when you assert or assume in your argument that miracle is unnatural, and when you declare that miracle is mysterious and nature incomplex, you are not stating half the truth.

Some people make much about inspiration. They say they don't believe in "inspiration." They believe in the inspiration of the poet. You can explain the inspiration of the prophet as easily as you can that of poet, and easier, because the Bible says clearly that "holy men of old spake

as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," and man is a spirit and God is a Spirit, and God's Spirit can operate on man's spirit—and he does it. Your not understanding things is no bar to facts. What I plead for is that we deal with such common fairness with the mysteries of the salvation of the Son of God, as we deal with the mysteries of the mechanism of the world we form a part of and in whose machinery we form a cog.

The mystery of Christianity is part of its credentials. If it were without mystery, I would not receive it. If it is fresh from God, it must have some mark of his handiwork upon it, and that mark is the strange mysteriousness of the thing. Psychology is the science of the human soul. Theology is the science of the human soul as God redeemed it and regenerated it. Psychology deals with the soul as it is; theology with the soul as God is going to deal with it. If you don't understand psychology, if you don't understand the mystery of the will, if you don't understand the mystery of intellectualization, if you don't understand the mystery of the sensibilities, I want to know by what conceivable logic you shall think that you shall comprehend the system by which God makes a soul from the thing it is into the thing it ought to be. You can no more understand it than the bird that sits on yonder electric wire can understand the electricity that thrills beneath it. You can no more understand redemption than you can under-

stand how the bird floats in the air, but it does. Not a man ever explained the mystery of a bird's flight. Nobody has ever explained the lark's song. You understand the mystery of redemption just as you understand the mystery of the lark's song—you understand neither the one nor the other. I can understand it as readily as I could believe that midwinter will blossom into spring.

I am girt about with mystery as valleys are hedged about by the great mountains whose breast forms a shelf where the winter snows may lodge themselves. This mystery is Christianity. It is believable because it is mysterious. Its well is so deep that it runs down into the profound nature of God. Its altitude is so splendid that it reaches above eternity. Its breadth is so vast that it reaches every human soul and past it: and do you think that so great and so vast a geography, so strange and complicated a topography—do you think you shall master it? Never!

The old Egyptians buried with their dead a symbol of immortality which was the scarabæus; and if you should take from their sarcophagi their buried rulers, other than those that have been taken, you would see a scarabæus, which would mean that that buried emblem declared belief of the immortality of him with whose dead body it was buried. Mystery is God's scarabæus. He puts it everywhere he has been. He puts it in the child's life; he puts it

in the temple of manhood's prime, and in womanhood's shoreless character; he puts it in the pathway of all the stars; he writes it around the rims of horizons, of skies and seas; he puts it in the music of the ocean and in the tumultuous sighing of the tempest. Mystery is God's scarabæus; and it is in God's redemption.

God's redemption is God's infinite mystery. Everything else is finite. The night with all its stars is finite. God hath an angel that can go and put a rim around the universe. God is the only infinitude. In his shoreless ocean all islands sink; all vasty seas, all continents are submerged. He is so great, so strange, so unbewildered, so bewildering, that nobody understands him. Angels look at him and wonder. Civilizations and centuries front and look him in the face and get life and health and help. The ages have touched the hem of his garment and gotten virtue and healing. They saw him go from a cross to a grave, and from a grave to life, and up to eternal life. Mystery, mystery! God was in the flesh; God was in trial; God was strenuous; God was puissant; God fabricated life. He broke death's angry doors and crushed them underneath his feet, like the tread of the armies of the eternal God, and walked through and over and out. Mystery! Don't think he can be fathomed by our pitiful plumbing. Don't think you can wade even in his shallows. Don't think, my soul, that you can measure God's deeps, or go to the mar-



gins of his seas. Don't think that He who is "from everlasting to everlasting, God," that He "who taketh up the hills as a very little thing," don't think that He in whose hand's hollow the seas lie and writhe, don't think *you* can understand *him*.

He is the great companionable God. He has infinite excellencies and majestic silences. He has splendid audacities and accomplishments for bewildering us here, and that shall bewilder us forever hereafter. Now, as we study him here, and comprehend him a little, and know a little of his litany of sorrow, and learn a little of his chant of sublimity, and a little of the music of redemption, and catch a strain of his laughter that makes the singing of heaven; as we understand a little of it here, remember this: heaven is the room, and eternity is the space wherein we study the infinite Glory forever; and with angels and the saints of God fetched from the four quarters of the centuries, we shall look at him, and love him, and fall prone on the face, and cry with our lips in the dust, so our chants ooze from our lips with joy and yet with veneration—so shall we have a chance to study him forever. "Beyond controversy, great." Once more, my heart!—"Beyond controversy, great." Once more, my heart!—"BEYOND CONTROVERSY, GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GOD-LIKENESS." Amen.



## PRAYER

THOU, O Lord, hast redeemed me, holy and reverent be thy Name. I was nothing worth. My strength was as a spider's thread. My wisdom was as a bottle in the smoke: my expectation was in its coffin: my way was come to the dizzying edge of a precipice whose only onward was downward: my sight was turned to midnight blackness: "I shall never come to morning," was my soul cry.

When lo, O Lord, thou camest and didst lift up mine head. And now "my strength is as the strength of ten." My wisdom is come so that I know God is my One Need. My expectation hath had at thy hand, resurrection; and my way leads up to the foot of thy cross and thence by easy stages into heaven. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. I will shout and make merry in Christ. Amen.

## V

### WHERE IS ZEBEDEE?

“And they left their father Zebedee in the ship.”—*Mark 1. 30.*

THIS is the first and last we hear of Zebedee; and my inquiry this hour shall be, Where is Zebedee? As you notice, his sons went with Christ—left their father, left the ship, left the hired servants, left all and followed Christ. And the Gospels have much to say about these Zebedee boys, who, fishermen by birth, then fishermen in their own right of vocation, went away with Christ. James Zebedee was the first apostle martyr, and John Zebedee was a writer, and wrote what is in some regards the most clinging book in literature, namely, the Gospel of John. The Zebedee boys went with Him on the Mountain of Transfiguration, they were at the cross on which Christ died. John Zebedee was the man to whom the dying Christ bequeathed his mother, and John Zebedee was the fast runner, who when Mary Magdalene came and said, “The grave is empty,” outran logy Peter, and came to the grave and looked in and saw not Christ entombed, but Christ arisen, and believed. And

these Zebedee boys were together that great morning on Galilee's shore when Christ stood on the beach and called, "Children, have ye any meat?" And John Zebedee looked, when the voice came and thrilled him like a shock of lightning from the clouds, and said, "It is the Lord."

They were there. But where was Zebedee? That seems a sad question, does it? Yes, it is a sad question. I am not propounding it because I think it a joyous question. You shall hear no clanging of happy cymbals this morning. Where is Zebedee? His sons are with the Christ; but did I read you, "They left their father in the ship with the hired servants"? And Zebedee is busy fixing the nets, and says, "Good-by, boys."

"Father, come and go."

"Lads, I am too busy."

Fixing the nets.

And Christ says, "Come over!"

"Too busy, fixing the nets."

Where is Zebedee?

Where is Zebedee's wife? She was with Christ. She is called the mother of Zebedee's children; and she is with Jesus. And sometimes she was impertinent and sometimes she was a little foolish; but I wonder if there was ever a woman born who was not foolish about her boys. I wonder if there was, I say. I haven't chanced to see her, and I won't look her up. And so she wanted her boys to have a place highest in the kingdom

of God, and said so. She didn't keep anything back. There was a touch of femininity about her and she told her mind to Christ. But, but, at the cross when the Christ died there was the mother of Zebedee's children. And the boys were with Christ? Yes, truly. And the wife was with Christ? Yes, truly. But where is Zebedee? Didn't I tell you? He is mending the nets in the boat—staying with the servants; and the boat drifts out over the sea. What is Zebedee doing? Mending the nets. Never looks up, never looks up. Busy with the nets, and hears not. And Zebedee's fluttering ship's sail waning on the horizon, and the last rag of it melts out of the sky; and the last we see of Zebedee is as the first we saw of him—busy mending the nets. Never looks up. Where is Zebedee? Now, you remark that Zebedee had some commendable points in his character. He let his wife go to Christ. He didn't fuss and sulk. Some men who are mean and don't go to church will sulk and fuss and say, "I am not at home much and I think you could stay with me when I am home." I should hate to be that mean. If I let on to be a man, I wouldn't be that mean. But Zebedee didn't find fault with his wife for going with Christ and didn't find fault with his sons for going with Christ. O "Zebedee! Where are you, Zebedee?" But he does not hear; he is so busy mending the nets.

But did you think how much Zebedee missed?

Is there anything wrong with mending the nets? Nothing. The nets must be mended lest the fishes escape. Is there anything wrong with fishing? Nothing. Fishing must be done or people would go hungry. Is there anything wrong with owning a boat? Not in the least. The best prevention against anarchy is the owning of something. What is the wrong? The wrong is that he never was with Christ—in the boat with the nets and the servants. And his wife, she is hearing Christ, and his boys, they are hearing Christ, and the father, Zebedee—don't speak of it lest we weep. Now, what was it Zebedee missed?

Well, he missed seeing Jesus. Friends, if you were to raise this interrogatory with your heart, "What man in history would I care most to see?" (Will you take this in your heart? It will take but a moment.) "What man in history would I love most to see—Homer, Abraham, Moses, or Elijah, or Pericles, or Themistocles, or Epaminondas, or Julius Cæsar, or Mark Antony, or Cato, or Cicero, or Plato, or Plutinus, or Socrates, or Cromwell, or Lincoln, or Milton, or Shakespeare—whom would I most wish to see?" And I think I may not trespass upon the honest purlieus of your thinking when I say there is not a woman or a man in this company who, if he wandered through the universe of history, would not rather see the face of Christ. Oh, folks, pretty soon we shall. To-morrow, to-morrow, when the



mists have wiped their veils from the face, and the blue sky will not hedge us in, and the stars of the skies made to roof us are no more, we shall see him. But Zebedee missed seeing Christ; missed ever seeing him. Why didn't he see him? I told you, didn't I? He was busy mending the nets. Busy with the boats and with the servants. Busy and never saw him; never saw the smiling come over his lips; never saw the wonder of revelation and redemption; never saw him. Why, Zebedee, why, Zebedee, didn't you ever go and look at Christ? Busy—nets broken—busy? Not a bad face; no. Nor a hard face; no. Just a visionless face. Didn't see Christ? Why, I would run through the universe a million, million years to see him just once. Wouldn't you? Just once. Oh, folks! Oh, folks! In heaven it is always sunup, because they always see the face of Christ.

"Oh, Zebedee, wouldn't you quit toying with the nets to see the Christ?"

"Busy," he said; "busy. Bread and butter got to be made."

Zebedee missed seeing Christ.

Then Zebedee missed hearing Christ. I have been much interested in Justin McCarthy's *Reminiscences*. Because he talks about so many people we would have liked to have seen and talked to, and nothing in his book impresses me so much as the folks he saw and heard. He heard Gladstone and Disraeli, and heard Wendell

Phillips and Beecher, and Thomas Huxley and Charles Dickens, and Robert Browning and William Makepeace Thackeray, and heard Garibaldi and Kossuth, and Prince Napoleon and our poet, Russell Lowell. Wouldn't you have liked to have heard Charles Dickens read *The Child's Dream of a Star*? Wouldn't you? And wouldn't you have liked to have heard "The Death of Sydney Carton"? Wouldn't you? Wouldn't you have liked to have heard Thackeray read the four Georges lectures? Ah, well, let us not waste breath or time. What is that compared with hearing Christ talk? Wouldn't you have liked to have heard him say grace? I would hate to be a Christian parent and leave in the memory of my children this, that they never heard their father say grace before meat. Wouldn't you have liked to have heard Jesus say grace? Wouldn't you have liked to have heard Jesus at his prayer. Wouldn't you have liked to have heard Jesus preach the Sermon on the Mount? Oh, that was a big sermon, but I would (you would not think unkindly of me, would you?) trade off a dozen times a day this sermon if I could only hear the Sermon at the Well. These sermons, preached to lonely or wicked or broken-hearted people—just one at a time—they make my heart itch to hear more about. John Zebedee heard it. Don't think that it says all the disciples were gone away to the city to buy meat. All the disciples were not. John could not have felt all that gust of

passion and thrill of wonder, and those wide winds of God blowing if he had not heard the sermon. Why, where was Zebedee? His boy heard it. Where was Zebedee? Why didn't Zebedee hear it? One of these mornings—it will be morning when he talks, even if it is midnight—one of these mornings the voice of Christ will speak, not with the voice of reverberant thunders to shake the heavens, only a voice, but I tell you it will go to the tangled universe of death, and the grave will hear it. Whose voice is it? Oh, it is Christ's voice. "Everybody, get up!"

And the dead shall hear his voice and answer, "Here!"

And Zebedee didn't hear the Christ. Never heard him.

"O Zebedee, what are you doing?"

"Mending the nets, mending the nets. Bread and butter. Somebody's got to earn the bread and butter. Mending the nets."

Then Zebedee never saw Christ do miracles of mercy. Now, some of these times we will see Christ lift up his left hand and the universe will grow black as ink and there shall be no lights scattered through the heavens, and all the whereabouts throughout created things shall be as black marl. But I won't wonder at that. That will be Christ doing away with things he brought into being. But the wonder to me would be to

see Christ take a sick woman by the hand and say: "Daughter, you are so sick and I am so sorry. You are well now. Go home and do your own housework; go on home." Wouldn't you have liked to have heard that? Upon my heart I'd go while life lasted to see that. Wouldn't you have liked to have seen Jesus when he walked along the road by the fringe of the desert and the leper came and looked in upon the world from which he was an outcast; and when Christ came toward him he thought that because he was busy he didn't see him, and so cried, "Leper, unclean; leper, unclean," and tried to cover up his face, and thought that Christ would stop and flee; but Christ walked straight toward him and never stopped, but rather hastened his springing step. And the leper called "Leper, unclean! Leper, leper, unclean!"

And Christ said, "I will cure you, I will cure you!"

And the hand of God touched him on the cheek. Wouldn't you have liked to have seen that? You could have. Wouldn't you have liked to have seen Christ when he came to where two women had heartbreak? They had no father, they had no mother, and they just had their two selves and their brother; Lazarus was his name. Women have got to have a man to love somehow, if they have to borrow him; and so these women had no husband and they poured all that amazing wealth of womanhood love on their brother; and

then he sickened; and the sickness grew tragical, and death came with breakneck haste and broke their house door wide open. Wouldn't you have liked to have been there when Christ said: "You are so lonesome. Lazarus, boy, come out. Your sisters want you; come out in a hurry."

"Zebedee, where are you?"

He says, "Busy fixing the nets broken by the fish haul."

And Zebedee missed seeing the cross. I think I would go farther to see the Sphinx than any other thing man has made on this planet. I think I would. Never had money enough to go there to see it yet. Maybe I won't. I would walk there if the ocean were good walking, but it is too wet, I am told. But I would go a long way to see the Sphinx. It is to me the most fascinating thing man ever shaped with his hands. You would rather see the Coliseum, would you? Very well. You would rather see the Cathedral at Rheims, would you? Very well. You would rather see the mosque of Saint Sophia, would you? Very well. I tell you what you would rather see. The cross on the hill and the Christ on the cross.

"But, Zebedee, what are you doing?"

"Mending the nets. Mending the nets."

"What is on the hill?"

"I do not know. Busy mending the nets."

On the hill is the cross, and on the cross the Christ, and the earth shakes and Galilee's waters

tumble, and for a moment Zebedee looks up and says: "Storm brewing, servants; set the sails. I am busy mending the nets."

And Zebedee doesn't know it was Christ that shook the lake. Mending the nets. Missed the Christ. "O Zebedee, where are you?"

"Busy mending the nets."

Then Zebedee missed seeing an empty grave. I will not talk about that now. Why? Well, I think my heart would stop preaching and start singing to see a grave where a Man slept and a grave that couldn't grip a Man and hold him. O Death, your hands are so white with the frosts of death, and your might is so mighty, and so mighty those sinews on thumb and fingers that have choked the throat of the world—and Death, what ails you now? And Christ got up and left death snarling. And Zebedee, you might have seen that. What is he doing? He doesn't know there is a grave empty at all. He is busy mending the nets.

Don't you feel like going and weeping for Zebedee? What he did was not wrong; but he missed in his sense of proportion. Life is not making a living; life is making a life; and we are not to work for our board. We are here to make an immortal soul that is worth God's keeping alive forever. That's what life's for. What's life for Zebedee? He answers, "Fishing." I could weep for Zebedee, but I tell you honestly

I haven't time to weep for him. There are so many Zebedees around. There are so many Zebedees around *now* that it takes my time to weep for them.

"Zebedee, what are you doing? Your children are in the church and your wife is in the church. Zebedee! Zebedee! Where are you?"

"Oh," he says. "Busy, busy!"

Some Zebedees on the Sabbath morning go down town and get their mail and read it. Now, that amazes me, that a man wouldn't know enough to know that six days are enough work days. There are enough days for business, and for the vigor of business. You ought to leave your mail alone for one day. Don't you business men know you can go at your six days' job with more prehensile fingers and with more sagacious intelligence if you leave your job alone for the Sabbath day. Oh, where is Zebedee now? He is sitting around home, smoking and lounging and taking it easy. His wife and his children go to church, perchance, and when they go home he says:

"Well, the preacher got through, did he? Preacher got through. He quit at the expiration of ideas, did he?"

"O Zebedee! What ails you, Zebedee?"

Now, I will say that Zebedee ought to belong to the Church of Jesus Christ. I do not say the Methodist Church. Don't you think it. Lots of people ought to belong to the Methodist Church. It would be good for them. But I am talking



about the God Church. Why ought Zebedee to be here in the church? Why? Well, because he is the head of the household. It makes a man stuck up to think that a woman will trade her name off for his. I never think of that but that I walk big. And it is funny what kind of a name a woman will trade off for, what other kind of a name, because the man is thrown in with the name. By the laws of this country a woman is not required to take a man's name, but you would need to work hard to have a nice woman marry a man and have him take her name. She would say, "My husband is too nice a man to be humiliated that way." You are pretty nice women. You are funny, but you're pretty nice. And I notice that woman will not only trade off her last name, but her first name. Her woman's name is often Susan Miranda, but she trades off that name and has her cards printed, "Mrs. James G. Thus-and-So." She traded off her name for a man's name. And I am saying this, Zebedee, when you give a name you ought to give Christ's name to the family. When your name is worn by your children you ought to see that your children have a Christian name. What are you doing? Mending the nets? And what happens? Why, we don't remember that John's name is John Zebedee, and that James' name is James Zebedee. And we say, "What gospel is this?"

"John's."

"John what?"

"John nothing."

And so Zebedee lost his chance. Zebedee, Zebedee! Why don't you, when you give your name to the household, give your household Christ's likeness. O Zebedee, quit fooling with the nets for a minute.

And then Zebedee ought to be with Christ, because a man has some influence with his own family. I didn't say much, did I? I said some. And it is a poor stick of a man that doesn't find himself consequential at home. There were some children of a preacher in Chicago some time ago going down by a structure in the city yclept Chicago, going down the street with their mother and they looked at a church—it was just before Conference, and it was a Methodist church, and these were a Methodist preacher's children, and they said, "Mama, let's go here." And she laughed—her husband wasn't there—and she laughed. And they said, "Why mama, why can't papa go there? He is as big a preacher as there is. He is as big a preacher as there is." O children, that is right. If the preacher doesn't cut much figure anywhere else he is somebody at home. And if a man is much a vagabond and torn and tattered, his children look up and say: "My papa said so. My papa said!" And I think fathers and mothers ought to have the sense to talk religiously before their children when they know their children take their cue from them.

If a man cuts figure in his family I tell you this, that Zebedee is the father of the Zebedee boys, and he is the husband of the Zebedee woman, and he ought—and I am not one to absolve him from his duty—to give those children and that wife a specimen of his being with the Christ. “O Zebedee, what are you doing?”

“Mending the nets.”

Then Zebedee ought to be with Christ because the religious function is the highest function of the soul; and in the old, patriarchal days, the old men of the tribe were the priests of the tribe. Mark you this, the highest function is the Christian priestly function, standing for God. Where is Zebedee? And my heart has ached so for Zebedee, and my lips and my heart have conspired to pray for Zebedee.

“Zebedee, where are you? Why aren’t you at church, Zebedee? Why don’t you pray, Zebedee? You want your wife to be a Christian. I think ninety-nine men out of the one hundred would marry a Christian woman in preference to an un-Christian woman. Where is your logic, Zebedee? Zebedee! Zebedee! Some one calling you? Oh, Zebedee!”

“I am Zebedee!”

“What are you doing, Zebedee?”

“Busy making ends meet.”

“Where is your wife, Zebedee?”

“She has gone to church to hear Christ preach, I reckon. She does often.”

And he catches up the torn thread of the torn net and ties it with deft fingers.

"Say, Zebedee, where are your boys—where's Jim and where's John?"

"Oh, they have gone to church to hear Christ preach."

"Zebedee, Brother Zebedee, why aren't you at church."

"Oh, I am busy mending the nets."

"O Zebedee, Zebedee, Zebedee! Where are you, Zebedee?"

PRAYER: O God, call Zebedee this morning—call him not away from his nets, but call him away with his nets—call him, O Christ. Then let Zebedee come to the Christ with his wife on his arm and with his children by him. Let Zebedee and the mother of Zebedee's children and the children of Zebedee all sit in the house of the Lord together, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## PRAYER

THOU who art the Lord of all worlds and all souls, the King of angels and Savior of lost men, we reverently bow down before thee. This earth is too much for us. We can neither save ourselves nor it. We should surely lose hope but for the Lord God Almighty. He is our Refuge and our Strength. We believe in him and his willingness and ability. The Christ who said "All power in heaven and earth" was in his hands is competent, we reverently believe, to save men and cities and nations with an everlasting salvation. Our appeal is to Christ. We have nowhere else to go nor need to go otherwheres.

Strengthen our faith. Stimulate our zeal. Direct our endeavors. Sanctify our activities and make us to be very sure of God and, so, very hopeful for men.

Thou Savior to the uttermost goal, make great inroads on the lost. Amen.

## VI

### THE CITY AND JESUS CHRIST

“And came into his own city.”—*Matt. 9. 1.*

WE are Christ-ians, for so the Antiochian jester pronounced the name of the followers of Christ. We cling to the nickname. The wit of Antioch—no man knows his name, but who does not know the name of Christ and his followers? The jester with his supercilious smile has withered like a leaf in the flame; and Christ rises with his shepherd's crook and cross the Shepherd of Mankind.

In his high name we meet this hour with bubbling laughter and adoration in our heart and on our lips. We speak; but our words are not labial sounds; they are phrasing of our brain and heart—both brain and heart being charged with the Christ thought and the Christ heart.

Whatever we do or look upon or pray over it is in the light of and in the name of the Lord Christ, whose bondsmen we be. We do approach everything as Christians first. The educator who sneeringly asked, “Is there a Christian chemistry?” had he known more would have saved his breath. There is a Christian chemistry, just as there is a Christian everything. Christ invades

all shores of thought, and provinces of the human investigation. He is all provinces.

Perhaps here is our trouble in discussing the city. We think of it, talk of it, as "the city," whereas what we have is in actuality "Christ's City." How that changes the furrows we plow across the burning marl of a great metropolis! "The City" might be hopeless, but "Christ's City" is hopeful. Always hope when the name of Christ intrudes.

So we are not here as a debating society of sociologists. Frequently, and very often, and almost always, it is the sociologist's city we confront. That mars our attitude. Their view of society is hopeless. They hold a cloud of smoke over the town site so the sun has little function. That is no slur on the sociologist; but he has a passion for blazing a trail. He thinks he has a new thing. He puts the halter on the city as if it were a calf and leads it into his stall. He speculates, and woe to the city which denies the validity of his speculation. I know the social workers in America fairly well for the past twenty-five years. I have labored in their bailiwicks. I have preached without their permission in their purlieus and always without their sanction. They have been native in their egoism (I do not say egotism) and have held in suspicion the minister of Christ and the ministry of Christ in such wise that it would have been irritating had it not been downright funny. The social worker



has been invited by preachers and laymen to enlighten them, and, nothing lacking or doubting, has enlightened them with superior air and Ultima Thule dictum and settles all "city problems" (as he always denominates them), and what was scarcely less than tragedy settled the questions so that only the unwary and unwise or overeager minister dare even ask a question. Whenever he did, he was overlooked in the reply as in the wide pity that anyone should even attempt to masticate the cud he was given to swallow whole. I do not speak at random. I know whereof I speak. For twenty-one years now I have been a city man dwelling in the sub-metropolis of America and lesser cities. Any number of times I heard the sociological worker (and practically all the nonchurch social workers are sociologically sterilized) effervesce in dreary fatalism on heredity and environment and dull-eyed atheism, and gave it as the last word to be pronounced, and then have heard jejune Christians—men and women or preachers—teach it in Sunday school as if it were the oracles of God. I have heard them get off genetics and eugenics as though they were talking sanity, whereas they were only talking stock-breeding, whose science is not applicable to men. Cattle are beasts, lovely beasts; man has a soul, a lovely demoniacal, angelic, gigantic human soul. Immortality makes all the difference. Most city specialists I have encountered were so impressed with the city

problems (again so called) that they were mortally afraid of the city. They could prognose, dose, but not understand or heal.

We Methodists study the city in the light of Christ and in the name of Christ. This is not a fatalistic business. It is a glorious, victorious business. I could not pose as a city authority because I have preached in the city and secured a hearing for my preaching. You must fail in the city ministry to really become an expert. I know men who absolutely failed in getting the heeding or a hearing for their ministry who now go out as eventual enlighteners, men who never had a congregation in a city little or big, who now go about telling all the preachers how to get a crowd.

So, I shall speak as a man who has lived in the city twenty-one years, has loved the city, been battered by the city, mauled by the city, but not mutilated by it beyond recognition. I am Christ's city man, being Christocentric in all my thought, relation, beliefs, even prejudices.

The first thing to inquire of any man or woman discussing the city matter is—are you head first and heart first a Christian? If not, you have no bearing on our deliberations.

The city and Jesus Christ—that has light and leading. The leaden smoke that clouds the city is splintered into a thousand rainbows. The thunder of the city and its wild Niagara do but as Niagara does when the sun is shining—give

theme for rainbows; and the tumult lifts itself into orchestral majesties.

My observations as a city preacher are:

Observation One. *There is no city gender.* We are so persistently told that the city is one thing and the country is another thing. In a word, that there are two genders, a city gender and a country gender, which is not what Christ wrote down in his grammar of gender. He announced that there was one gender and that was the human gender. "Jesus Christ by the grace of God tasted death, for every man." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever..." Thus we have it "the every-man gender" and "the whosoever gender"; and these two genders are one in faith in Christ. This is a fundamental matter. Folks are folks, in country or city. Christ after the flock not country man or village man, or city man, Christ just after the human flock. He was at home with folks. His preaching was not city preaching nor country preaching. It was human-divine preaching and addressed to the human race, which he greatly loved and loves greatly yet and will love greatly always. This love of Jesus for the human race is a beautiful, deathless affection. I deem nothing more detrimental to effective city Christian work than a notion that the city people are different from country people. They are just people. That is all God has. Jonah, of the Nineveh Circuit, was a

country preacher but seemed to know the vernacular of the metropolis. Practically all the leading city pulpits now are occupied by country preachers. There is just preacher. I wish we could kill the notion and let no one know where it is buried, for some brother will be bound to go and exhume the corpse if he could find the grave. I have preached in country and city, and nowhere without hearing, and have not had two attitudes—a city attitude and a country attitude—but just one attitude toward humanity redeemed by Christ. Christ wept over the city, they say. But they would do well to recall how he laughed over it and laughed with it. You will know Jesus wept over the world and died for the world but broke an alabaster box of laughter into the world's heart and on the world's head. The world will never get over that holy chrism. The weeping of Jesus was not confined to the city. He wept over sin, not city sin, but sin. Sin caused the heart-break of God.

The city has more folks in a lump than the country, that is all. The city sins and the country sins, and neither country nor city sinner, just sinners. The city has folks, and that is all the world has. We approach the city, and we Methodists always approach the city as Christ's city filled with the lost sheep of the House of Israel. Plenty of the lost and, in the light of Christ, plenty to be found and plenty of the found.

Observation Two. *The city has not tribality or*

*nationality, but only humanity.* This consideration too is fundamental. We have approached the city as polyglotal which by the dictionary is accurate, but by the Bible of Christ is inaccurate. Pentecost was notable because all sorts, all tribal associations, were present in the audiences. They all heard the wonderful works of God. In this Pentecost is our precedent, if we dote on precedents. Greeks and dwellers in Mesopotamia, Barbarians, Cythians, bond and free—these are all out in God's big pasture, the lost sheep, this big world's lost sheep.

For many years, as some here present will bear witness if they care to recall the item, this speaker has held that the right way to make foreigners Americans and Christians was by bringing them Christ in the American vernacular. He held then and now that the foreign block could not be smashed while we preached with the fatalism of foreign speech. Not the speech the people were born to but the speech to which they immigrated they should use. I am no new arrival in this doctrine. I have not been lauded by experts who dote on reaching men through their foreign tongue. Now, at last, it is shown that this attitude was not foolish and needs no revision. We have been perplexed by the jargon of foreign tongues and then dismayed by the babble, and strangely harked back to Babel, whereas it was not Babel but Pentecost.

The city has just folks—not foreign folks, or

native American folks, or black folks, or white folks, or Orientals, or aboriginals. When this United States amassed an incredible army it did not raise a city army and a country army and an Irish-American Army, and a Polish Army, nor an English-American Army, nor yet a Jewish-American Army. It calmly drafted an American army and proceeded to inoculate the whole mass with American language and military training. Heed this similitude. Americanize the city crowd in the name of its human homogeneity and not in the name of its tribal heterogeneity. Compulsory teaching and learning of the American speech should be demanded of everyone staying on the American continent. The foreigner wants his mother tongue and be coaxed by it, but he gets a job in America and can get Christ by the same speech and in the same way. If we were now without foreign-speaking Methodism in America, we should be better off and the world would be better off. They will deny this, but, others are better judges of this matter than themselves because they speak from within a group and we speak outside of all groups looking at the entirety and not as the tribality. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism," and now in America and the American city we should add "One language." We need unification. Varied languages make for disintegration; one language makes for integration. The foreigner must be appealed to as the child of the heavenly Father. Do not bother

him or ourselves about his earthly fathers. He knows too much and too well of that. But as a child of God he has need of enlightenment and good news. He needs the gospel. The great substrata of life are always the same. Christianity and Christ deal with the universal substrata. As a man, not as a foreign man, as a man, just as a man, attack him so in the name of the Christ who was God-Man.

But the reply is, "We shall not reach him so." The apt rejoinder to that reply is, "We have not reached him so." The answer is tit for tat but is truthful. We have not succeeded widely by the many-language route; let us try the one-language way. We have not succeeded so admirably in the old way that we can afford to be perky in our championship of that way, much less desire to persist in it. Strike for the city people as a people of God and for God in the American speech which they have learned or should learn more than ever before and let the converts become members of the American church, which is what we do in our Methodist Episcopal Church all over America, thank God.

In a Conference one of our leading preachers was French, one was Italian, another Irish, another Scotch, another English, another German, another Scandinavian, another Swede, and Manx, and a Jew. You could have changed a Pentecostal heterogeneity into Pentecostal homogeneity in that Conference. It is so we shall thus outrun



all our past deeds. All hail to one way to all folks in the interest of America and the Christianization of the unsaved.

Observation Three. *We must not be scared of the city.* The city is terrible but sublime. I cannot refrain from the solemn glory I myself have had in the turbulence of a great city. My forebears were vikings and are buried in the stormy North Atlantic. It may be their fight is in my blood that I, a country man, luxuriate in the city riot. I know its fury and fearfulness; I know its anarchy and murder; I know its squalor, filth, and perfidy; I know its lust and lechery, but I know too that for all these things the Christ is equal and for all these he only is the only cure. I have in passing from the Labrador out into the upper Atlantic seen the wrinkled waves of the sea pass along the great ocean like sweaty tigers with waves perhaps a mile from crest to crest, then lightly spring over the vessel's deck in labyrinth of foam and fury, and I was not scared; I was elated. They were swift with death but wild with life. The glory of it rollicked as high as the sky above the peril of it.

So in the city. Its fury, its abandon, its unseemliness, its carousing, its sleeplessness, its polyglotal trumpetry, its assassins' knife—its everything but lethargy summons the Christ. He is not afraid of the howling tempests of this arctic sea. He is invited by it. He is not afraid of the city; he is invited by it. Christians, con-

sult Jesus Christ, and not those fatalists who have no way out but a soup kitchen and an amusement hall.

Observation Four. *The city is not to be dealt with on the line of its social or industrial cleavage any more than on the line of its tribal cleavages.* In my observation Christian work has been mutilated and nearly slain in many cities by the workers thinking they must pander to class prejudice in order to invite people to Christ. The chief company of social workers in a city think they must become labor agitators and strike promoters and raise shibboleths of class and mass, laborer and capitalist, employer and employee, and advocate socialism and become bolshevistic so as to get the discordant types to Jesus. Said a Methodist preacher in my city once: "I do not dare to say I am a Methodist in my church. The people would not listen to me." That preacher was near a fool. He was a disciple of I know not what—not of Jesus of Nazareth. His belief has no inculcation for a lover of Christ and a believer in Christ.

As between the dollar and the man, Christianity is always for the man. But Christianity is dead against anarchism. Let it say that. Christianity is against any organization that in the name of labor or incendiarism calls American citizens scabs and denies them the right to earn their living when and how and where they will if competent, and no man or organization must deny them.

Under the Constitution no foreigner or citizen may deny to any American citizen the right to get and keep a job. Let the church say that. We are for all men's rights, not for a few men's rights as against all men's rights. Let the call of the Methodist Church be preached in the equality of man as man in Christ and do to the death the making of classes which is un-republican and un-Christian. Any institution which not wittingly but actually tends to make classes, which in America is inexcusable and ought not to be tolerated. The Methodist Church makes all one in Christ Jesus.

Observation Five. *The gospel of Jesus Christ is our preachment.* In city work specialists have often insisted on things which were no gospel and that these must be dealt with to bring men to God. They were wrong. They reply, "They will listen to no gospel." Try them. The masses of people since Jesus nowhere wildly took Christ to their hearts. The kingdom of God has not been colonized. Christ is decent, Christ is clean. That is not popular with very many. But that is our only charter to preach Christ. He is their Hope and their Saviour. A company of country preachers freshly picked from the country bushes or pulled up from country fields, and with their country freckles on their faces and on their hands, and no indoctrination in socialism and its accomplishments and embellishments, but just robust believers in the redemption of Christ, will do

more to bring the city to its Lord than all the specialists ever trained in the world. The especially trained for the city are in deadly peril of knowing so much about what not to do that they never rise up and do the brawny things they ought to do.

An article in our church papers to the effect that the Good-Will Industries proved the church to be practical should have been censored. That type of talk is harmful all day long and all night long. The Good-Will Industries are good but are purely a minor good. The great Good-Will Industry and the great practicality in the Church of God is bringing the Christ to the city and country and making men familiar with the new life in God so that people in country and city alike shall have knowledge of the profound music and might of redemption.

Christ was slain at a city, but those who brought him to his death were not city people. City and country wicked people conspired to kill God. But he refused to be held by the grave they thrust him into. But for man universal he tasted death, and for man universal he rose again from the dead, and to man universal the living Christ proffers redemption, and to saved men he offers a habitation in the City of God. And the Land of Beulah lies around about Jerusalem the Golden. For which all thanks be unto our God.

## PRAYER

MY blessed heavenly Father, thou art the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of Glory, thou art my heavenly and earthly Father. I think of that and feel as if I were holden in the arms of the sunlight. And I am. The arms of the Infinite Sunrise hold me to the Father-breast.

How am I blest! How my heart beats wild as the heart of a happy bird and wilder still like the heart of an archangel!

I have been redeemed, which the archangel has not. I am blest beyond him. Thy cross has set me above principalities and powers even in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

My life has been motherless and much time fatherless, but, according to thy Word, the Lord took me up. How true have I found that gracious Fatherly promise. When thy mother and father forsake thee (when death takes them across his knee and breaks them like a sword) then the Lord will take thee up. I have found how greatly true that promise was—"shall take thee up." Rightly spoken, "take thee up." I have been taken up of the heavenly Father. Up and set in the crest of the dome of the sky, up where I look down on the mountain summits, taken up where

"I survey the wondrous cross  
On which the Prince of Glory died,"

taken up when nothing counts but God—his providence, his far-going providings, even eternal life.

I being thus attended, thus led, thus loved by my heavenly Father, I wonder and adore and pray that this New Year I may live and move and have my being in thee, thereby serving all interests terrestrial and celestial.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and the Holy Spirit in Christ. Amen.

## VII

### HEADED INTO SPRING

“For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.”—*The Song of Solomon* 2. 11, 12.

“Behold the fig tree, and the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.”—*Luke* 21. 29, 30.

WINTER is on the road to spring. Some think it a surly road. I do not. A primrose road to spring were not as engaging to my heart as a frozen, iced, craggy way angered over by strong winds that never take the iron trumpets from their lips. God is as fond of contrast as Macaulay. He knows to make the most of antitheses. He has lands where envious summer pants and seeks inviting shade to wipe the sweat from its salty face. It is one phase of God's infinite variety. He never stales. He will not have all wild violets or wild roses. He will have some wild fleurs-de-lis and purple asters and orchids growing out of decaying bark on tropic trees to dawdle with the wind.

Yet is not this summerland unswept of any gelid winter gale. God prefers, may I say,

summer and winter. He has an arctic all-winter and a tropic all-summer, and wild with poetry and quest he has part-winter and part-summer.

Winter is not a parenthesis between fall and spring. It is an argument for spring. Winter makes men know they need the spring.

There we have it. This is the lovely logic of wintry weather to make men know that they need the spring. It is a haunting logic. For myself I would not evade winter. If I could omit the winter threnody piled-high with drifts of snow and sword-edge winds, I would not. I like the racket of the wintry winds. They make so much of their roadway across a world naked of foliage so that the winds travel light like an eagle with rested wings, and boom like a wild surf on a desolate seashore, whose only inhabitant is a wrecked ship. Winter is a bludgeon as ructious as a storm wind. It wields its shelalah with a primitive elation as if its lifetime were a wake. Winter is ruthless and sometimes sullen and murderous. The wild winter North has gulped ten thousand summers down nor left a froth of sunshine on its lips.

Everlasting winter would murder hope. It has room for trumpets and viols and the arctic-whine of violins, but never a rift of sunshine nor of bobolink's lyric nor the meadow lark's song.

Winter's notion of poetry is tragical. It knows nothing of comedy. Its laughter was frozen on its lips long ago. An icicle has no smile in it.

When the sun makes it agleam with diamonds its makeshift for smiling makes a body shiver like a maniac's laughter. Its notion of play and fun is to freeze the cattle on the plains and leave the wild buffalo in the mountains a herd of frozen death still standing frozen to the ground. Plainly, winter lacks heart. It has plenty of backbone; but backbone, while necessary in man or woman or policy, should not be on the outside. It looks better concealed, and I should imagine would travel better. And external backbone would be subject to too many extra and unnecessary knocks and it gets enough where it is located. Frankly, the trouble with winter is that it is all backbone. It is fleshless, insensate, with neither a breast to be leaned on nor a heart to love and ache, and, if need be break, nor any kindly hand to fondle and caress like a sea-wave on a sunny shore half asleep.

If winter were our terrestrial destination, we should die of hunger. Gaunt want would beckon us to our graves, but we could not stumble so far. We would tumble down dead on the gravel yard road and no hand would be nigh to afford us burial. Winter is not an end. It is in transit. It is headed to bankruptcy. The sheriff will sell its stock for what he can get and an ice man will be the only bidder at the sale.

Here is where the Christian hearts differ from the non-Christian. An atheist, a rationalist, a positivist, avouch we are heading into winter



to be frozen in forever. He thinks the ice floe will again trespass on the tempered and the tropic zones. To him the earth is a ship like the Fram to be imbedded in a sea of ice, but not, like the Fram, to ultimately get through the ice floe to an open sea. Evolution has not made good. It devil-utes as well as evolutes. We have seen this in recent years. Though our brain be torpid from hibernation, we dare not forget that. What we know we know. We cannot and we dare not forget Germany. If the Great Companion be dead, as the agnostic avers, we are headed into eternal winter and are near it now.

Christians hold a wholly different theory. They know we are headed into spring. There is another word to utter when winter is stuttering with thick and frozen lips and fumbling tongue. That word is spring, spring, spring. Across the wild winter revels we faintly yet truly hear a blue bird's song like an angel's flute. There be lilies at fragrance, and flowers be on the winter's bourne. Christ planted them and keeps them growing. Peace, heart, hurt heart, breaking heart, doubting heart, sobbing heart. Consider that Easter is in the early spring barely outside the threshold of winter. And winter betimes is in the air. Sometimes the winter staggers back like a drunkard and slays all greening things, and then the spring pushes him back with a wave of the lily and he sprawls on his face stone dead.

We Christians are spring-time bound. We cross

the winter. We are always on the road across it but never on the road into it. It is on the road to spring. Alleluiah, this is the unsurly philosophy of Christianity. This is the dogmatics of God. Winter cannot last. Spring will last. "There everlasting spring abides" comes like a robin's call across the snow and truly endless spring abides, abides.

For such valid reason, therefore, Christians sing along the wintry ways. They see things as they are *and* as they are to be. Winter cannot freeze them in. Springtime thaws them out. Blessed spring. Christ is our springtime. Christians are mutilated by the winter of sin but not destroyed. We hear about being cast down but are not tutored of Christ to be destroyed. We wage war with sin. We fight heathenism in our own land and every land. We have a lamp in the hand, and this lamp is the sun which draws near to our world each passing day. Premillenarianism delights that Christ's gospel has failed, so that Christ will come and do we know not what. No, we Christians are in ecstasy that the gospel has not failed; and we are not heathen, so do not greatly doubt but greatly believe "*He shall not fail.*" "We know whom we have believed, and that in his right hand he holds the fragrant springtime for the world and for the world to come." It is winter. Sin is devilish, icy, horrible. Dante's Satan is frozen in hell by a frozen river made by the tears sin has made mankind

shed. 'Tis a great poet's spiritual sagacity that saw this. Sin is winter and headed toward eternal winter. Christianity is spring and headed toward eternal spring.

That is the witfulness of the Methodist Centenary. We believe, therefore have we given and prayed that this frozen world and the sinning world be made like a spring wind laden with innumerable odors. We shall not fail. The need of the world is so clamant and sin is so necessary to be slain and this exploit is so in harmony with the heart of God that it must succeed.

All the winter's sin makes us know we need the spring where sin shall make the roadways dangerous no more. Christianity has the world's answer to the world's need, the only answer. Christianity can come across the winter and it can invade the spring and bring a sinning world out of ice drift into star drift and flower drift and song drift as birds and children and redeemed hope from every tribe and into the hallelujah choruses of the redeemed, "Where everlasting spring abides."

Headed inevitably and rejoicingly into spring. And Christ is that everlasting Spring.



## PRAAYER

LORD, we humbly bless thee for thy providence. It is so wide a word. It fills eternity. It lasts. It has a thousand medicines. We know so little of it, only we know it. Is not that enough? Did not Jesus say we were of more worth than lilies, and the short-lived grass, and the chattering sparrows?

“O ye of little faith,”—my Master, even Christ, say not that to me, I humbly pray. Answer me with another word—“Great is thy faith,” say that to me, and may I measure up to that amazing encomium.

Thy providence—I cannot speak witfully concerning it; but in my heart I gladly acknowledge God is over all. He is my Father. I rest under his canopy and my awakening is lighted by his holy stars. All my way has guardianship, since though I fall God shall be along-side, and I shall rise and God shall make journey with me. I shall die, but not in the dark. My God shall shine his light along my staggering path so my dimming eyes shall see the way to take. I shall not miss the crossing.

The providence of God stands sure; and so I stand kept, fortified, profited, enabled, and make my journey attuned to heavenly anthems. My soul, thy providence is Christ. Rest and Amen.

## VIII

### GOD'S OWN NOTION OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"—*Luke 12. 6.*

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father."  
—*Matt. 10. 29.*

IF Jesus had not talked this way, for my part I would not have believed this talk; but seeing Jesus did talk this way, and seeing we never knew him to mislead us, and seeing he is the Truth, I cannot help but believe that this is so. It is too wonderful to be true on the one side; and then, on the other side, it is altogether too necessary to be untrue, and Jesus said it; and that is its certificate of truth. And, in a word, what I would have you catch with all its divine preciousness and cadence is that Jesus says in the scripture I read you that the sparrow's life was looked after by God; and the second scripture says that there is always one mourner at a sparrow's funeral, and that mourner is God.

Now, Jesus evidently had been over at the market and had been noticing the price list of

sparrows; and these sayings, that are often confounded in thought as if they were one, are not one and are not identical, but very gladly and very truly two sayings. Jesus said at different times two strangely and beautifully different things about sparrows. He said that sparrows sold two for a third of a cent. That is cheap enough for preachers to buy them; and that is cheap enough to have a Sunday dinner for the poorest of us. Two sparrows—the market price in the price list—two for a third of a cent. And then when the family was bigger and they needed more meat, Jesus saw that the price list read that if you bought two farthings' worth, you would get an extra sparrow thrown in for a bargain, and you would get five sparrows for two thirds of a cent.

Well, now, is that all? Why, no; that is not all. Is that the start? Well, it is not quite the start. What is this sparrow talk, foolish as the bickering of sparrows on a roof? Why, it is not sparrow talk; it is God talk. And Jesus says of these sparrows, so tiny, so tough, so undesirable for food even for the poorest that they are practically actually worthless in the markets, that God looks after the life of every one of them, and God digs the grave for every one that dies, and God is the mourner at every worthless sparrow's grave. And then he says—didn't you hear him?—"We will not forget!" And then he says with a jubilancy of voice like the blowing of great music

—oh, it is so heartening to hear it!—"Are ye not of much more worth than many sparrows?" "Don't you think," he says, "that God will look after you folks, if he forgets no sparrow folk? Don't you think he will take care of your children when he takes care of a sparrow's children? Don't you think he will plan for your future when he plans for the sparrow's future?" Jesus said: "Don't lose heart. You are not worthless. God notices you. He has them under his eye; he won't forget you." Take heart, O souls; clap the hands of your heart and sing. He is out watching over us.

Now, there are two primal ideas that I think absolutely necessary in any worthy life. One of these is a right idea about man and the other of these is a right idea about God. If you make a miss on either of these notions, you will never get right on any notion. In a great many matters, if you hazard on them and fail in the hazard, you guess and guess amiss, and figure at the sum and figure it out wrong, there will be nobody hurt and no issue changed; but if you get a wrong notion of God and if you get a wrong notion of man, every notion of the universe which lies between these two strange extremes will be defective and only defective forever. You might be able to measure the bulk of the stars; you might be able to catch the tug on the cable of gravitation; you might be able to compute for nautical almanacs the coming and going of the



tides; you might be able to name a discovery for the new archipelagoes of stars; but if you do all that and do it well, namely, accurately, and do not get the right notion of the man who did the estimating and the God who did the creating of the star and gravitation and the tug of tide and ocean that hath the tides, and sun that pulls the tides with the moon that is the intermediary, all your astronomy will be worse than a broken cobweb that hangs between the sunflowers on the dusty autumn plain. Who is man? That is one matter. Who is God? That is another matter. Here is man at the poles of the universe, and yonder is God at the poles of the universe. And where is man going? Oh, well, if he is going right, he is going toward God.

Who is man? Now, then, if we were good logicians, if we had a knowledge of man—a right knowledge of man—then we could get knowledge, a right knowledge, of God. Or if we had right knowledge of God, then we could, if we were good logicians, get right knowledge of man. But we are not good logicians. Most people's logic breaks like a dismantled rainbow and we have nothing but shivering remnants of departed glory. And, besides all that, we cannot get a right notion of man and we cannot get a right notion of God. We must be tutored. We must be shown. We must have some schoolmaster. We must be informed.

Nothing is more simple to the theory than to

say that anybody can get a right notion of man; and truly it looks so, and truly it is not so. We are with ourselves all the time. Some of us might be glad to get away from ourselves, but we are not permitted. We can get away from other folks, but we cannot get away from ourselves. A man eats with himself, he thinks with himself, he loves with himself, and dreams with himself. He himself is his own companion from birth morn to death's dewless night. Yet there is not anybody with whom we are absolutely less familiar than we are with ourselves.

People know little about many things, but I will say they know less than little about themselves. If you want an accurate judgment of a man, don't ask the man; ask his wife. And if you want an honorable judgment, namely, truthful, of a man, don't ask his wife; ask his neighbors. A man doesn't know himself. A man is apt to overrate himself. If a man were to put a price mark on himself, knowing that he was to be put in a salesroom or bazaar, don't you know that he would put about ten times as big a price mark on himself as the other folks would put on him? Don't you know that his neighbors would put a bargain price on him? And don't you know that he would put a price mark on himself that would defy all sale? That is solely to say that a man is not acquainted with himself. That is all it is to say. I do not fault it, not at all. I say this, that if a man didn't think some-

thing of himself, and if a man didn't have a bigger estimate of himself than most folks do, he could not stay with himself at all. I think it one of the sweet kindnesses of God that we do not know ourselves. We do not know the right climbing directions of our own powers. We cannot quadrate our own possibility in the universe. We usually are of lesser bulk than we dream. We are not worlds but satellites. And it is not in actual usage possible for a man to know himself; and a man that lives with himself all the time is still an unknown continent to himself. And if we don't know ourselves, how are we going to know God? And we don't know other folks. We cannot plummet souls. We cannot know how wide the deserts of the soul are. We do not know what vast despairs tyrannize over people's hearts. We do not know what shifting storms rankle in men's lives. We do not know how the hell sea angers on the rocks of people's characters. The next-door neighbors of us—the next-door neighbors to them—we do not know. And when a man gets to be a genius, as few men in the history of literature are, their faculty superb is that they know other people's souls. They do not know their own souls, but other people's souls. Shakespeare was no more a judge of himself than other people are judges of themselves; but he knew other people's souls so well that when we are with him we think we have gotten to a master of souls. And all the

greatest men that ever drew breath and sighed and sobbed and lifted up a wonder call and charmed the earth and put new rainbows in the despairing stormy sky of life, were people that knew more about people than other folks; but they didn't know all! Now, when we don't know men, how are we going to get logical basis from which to argue up to God? And if we don't know man, having been man all our life, and if we don't know man having lived with man all our life, how are we going to know about God? And the plain, simple statement is that neither man nor God have we ever gotten rightly at; and the plain, simple statement is that man and God we must get rightly at or we shall get right with nothing and we shall arrive at no right destination, and we shall tie our boat up at some foreign wharf where we have no business. And this is why Jesus came here.

Jesus came here to talk on just two matters; one of his items was man and the other of his items was God. He never talked about anything else. If he talked about the sparrows, he was looking at man, not at the sparrows. When he talked about God, and when he talked about men, then he was at his theme. And the incarnation is sufficiently explained by the impossibility of us folks that are born to live and born to die getting right notions about either God or man. And Jesus came to tell us how it was with man; and he came to show us how it was with God.

And so man and God are not only the extremes of Jesus' talk, but they are the sum total themes of Jesus' discourse.

And we must have a right notion about God. If we get wrong about God, our catastrophe is supreme. There is no mending it. If you get a pusillanimous God, you will have a pusillanimous population. If you get a magnanimous God, you will have a magnanimous population. If you get a heartless God, you will have a Roman population. If you get a gleeful, æsthetic God, you will have a Greek race of laughter and of song and of grace and death. And if you get a heart God, and a God of a heart, then you will get a heaven populated with music and laughter, and an earth populated with joy, and a world that is made so tender that a touch upon it is like the touch upon the hands of a little child. We must get right notions about God.

And Jesus came here to *show* us, not to tell us. These people that tell us may be prophets, and you may name them seers, but the people that show us—they are glorious. Telling folks won't do. We are so dull-eared, we are so incapable of larger understandings; we are so incompetent for the reasoning processes; we are so dubious or so hesitant, so bordering on despair, so fretful; we are so incompetent to climb; our sublimities are so far from us that we can catch them only temporarily in the wandering vastnesses of our moods; and what we want is somebody to show

us. And Jesus came and showed us himself, and he said, "I am the Son of man." Oh, now, is this a man? This is a man. And he came and showed us himself and he said, "I am the Son of God." O Christ, what are you doing? And he said, "I am showing you man and I am showing you God; look and remember." That is it.

Now, what is God doing? Allow there be a God, what is God doing? And we will never get at that, in my belief, unless we get it from Jesus. What is God doing? Why, he is doing the big things. What is God doing? Why, he is making charts for the stars to sail by. What is God doing? He is building the grand dyke around the seas to keep the hazard of the waters in, when the storm is fingering with the waves. What is God doing? Keeping the mountains in their places where he has anchored them. What is God doing? Sowing the forests so the ships shall not be without masts while the ages endure. What is God doing? Oh, you may reckon that from the days of Homer and Æschylus to the days of William Watson, anybody who tried to tell what God was doing without going to see him will have God off doing vast exploits and sailing vast seas and going through an interminable universe. And when Jesus came here he said: "God is staying down close along the ground, where he can watch the sparrows when they are building their houses; and he is staying down close along the ground so he can teach the witless,

worthless sparrows how to fly; and he is staying close along the ground so that when the baby sparrow falls from its ill-built nest he will be there to dig a grave for it; and he is staying close along the ground so that no bird shall come to its eternal slumber without having one Body by it to shed a tear. God is out around looking for the lost and caring for the last insignificant." There will be some other that will be out looking at the mountains. Some look at the mountains because they are so high and they hedge the sky and they catch the glory of the skies on their tops. But who is going to be around looking for the baffled folks and looking at the common things? And Jesus says, "God is." What I say is, nobody knew that but Christ, and nobody shows that but Christ. Thank God, beloved, this is the right idea of God, that nothing is beneath him, that he has no small work, that he has no insignificants; that everything that is around is a big enough thing for God to lay his hand on, and for God to touch with his fingers, and for God to caress with his tears—everything.

The right notion to get about God is not that God is exclusive, but that God is inclusive. That is the right notion about God. Why, woman, what are you hugging so? And she says, "I am hugging my baby." Ay, but there are a hundred babies at the orphanage that haven't anybody to hug them. And she says, "Oh, I am busy; I am hugging my baby." And she well might.

Anybody who wouldn't hug a baby such as was brought here for the preacher to baptize this morning, isn't worth keeping around. When you get so you don't want to hug babies, then nobody ought to hug you. What about the hundred babies motherless? Is God exclusive? Why, no, thank God, he is inclusive. He is around mothering all the motherless; he is around fathering all the fatherless. Who are you? I don't know who you are, but I know God knows who you are. Where do you live? I don't know where you live, but my God knows where you live. If God came to town to-day, he would not consult the city directory but come to your house and climb the stairs, or go down the back stairs, down the long, dark hall, and knock on your back door. How many numbers here? Why, number, number, number, everybody's room has a number, and there are so many numbers and so many rooms. But God never asks anybody where you live. He never makes a mistake about your room, but knocks at your door in the cellar or garret or anywhere in the apartments or anywhere in the town, and says, "I just came to town and thought I would come over to see you." "How did you know where I lived?" "Oh," he said, "I never forget." Thank God!

Now, then, that is the right notion of God. What Jesus meant to say, and what I think he did say, in terms as unforgettable as the minstrelsy of angels on the night Jesus was born, is that



there is a God in heaven and on earth, both in heaven and on the earth, to whom everybody is worthy, and with whom everybody is influential, and to whom everybody is a person of importance. O life, wouldn't you love a God like that? Who cares? God does. God *does*. Who notices? God does. This matter of noticing and caring, it is a great matter. Some people don't notice. You could pass them a hundred times and they don't notice. You could elbow up against people because you didn't notice where you are going, or sometimes because you want them to notice where you are going, and you want a smile from them, but they barely say, "Watch out where you are going and what you are doing." Some people don't notice; and then some people when they do notice don't care. They look at you and your face is furrowed. Why, it is plowed with the crazy plows of care, because the plows wherewith men plow the fields go straight across the field they are plowing, but the plow of care is a crazy plow; it runs its furrows zigzag. Some people when they notice you, don't care, and when they see all your life fairly plowed by the plow of care, they are so busy with themselves they don't have any more care than if they didn't notice you at all. And God notices, and God cares; and I am going to have comfort now.

There is a good deal of talk first and last about the immanency of God. That means God is Love not only there but here. And there is a good

deal of talk, witless in the main I think, about the carpenter theory of the universe, namely, that God built the universe and went off and left it. But the trouble with that kind of talk is this, that the people that make it against Christianity have not had Christ show them things, have not had Christ tell them things. Do you tell me there is a carpenter of the universe, or an absentee God and a Landlord that doesn't come to the house he has to rent, when he is down here watching for the sparrows? O soul, God is in town. O soul, God is in yourself. O soul, God will stay up with you. O soul, God will laugh with your joy. O soul, here is God. What a God that is!

I read this week one day how Dr. Grenfell, the man of the Labrador coast, out on a mission of mercy driven by his dogs, went out on an ice floe; then the floe drifted out to the sea, then dogs and masters tipped in the surly winter waters along the Labrador coast, then climbed along on a rock of ice and floated. And the storm was so cold and so bitter, and the dogs were so fierce that the doctor had to fight for his life. He slew some of the dogs to keep them from slaying him. He wrapped himself about with their skins. He took the legs of the dead dogs and tied the bones of the legs together and made a staff of such poor material as this, and took his own garment and swung it to the top piece of the sorry staff so somebody might see

him. And the winter storm was terrible; and the winter sea was surly; and the death hazard was imminent, and the dogs howled and fought like wild, uncanny beasts. And somebody saw that flagstaff made from the bones of the dead dogs upon which the man swung his own garment for a flag, and somebody came and rescued him. But what I want you to know and what I want to certify to, is, If nobody else noticed us, God would. God saw the battle in the briny, bitter sea. And what you say is, "Why didn't God help him?" Why, God did, dear heart. You mean, Why didn't God go and help him off the raft of icebergs? Oh, well, because God is in better business than helping folks off the icebergs. God's business is to help the man while on the iceberg to play the man while there, and in the storm to play the man while the storm angers and while he is fighting for life with the maddened hunger of the brutes to be so much the man that while God looks on he says to his angels, "Now play the hallelujah chorus. There is something being done that ought to wake your ecstasies. Now play, play!" And what I say this morning is that everybody harassed by care, and everybody dug into by the rowels of care and pain, and everybody baffled by the exigencies of things he cannot master, and everybody floating out on an iceberg in the winter sea to die, thinking that nobody knows and nobody cares—God cares and God knows, and he will

bring him to a desired haven, thank God! Ah, brothers, brothers! O sisters, sisters! God is around caring for the five-sparrows-for-two-farthing folk, all the cheap folks among us, all of us, all of us. God is noticing and God cares.

And when you remember this thing you must never forget that God came to die for his folks here; God came to die for his little folks here; God came to die for the least man and least woman of us here; then you will understand what Jesus meant when he said, "Are not ye of much more value than many sparrows?" God lives for the sparrows, but never dies for them. God both lives and dies for us, and then he lives again. Thank God! For human souls God lives and God dies, and God hath resurrections. And for these poor, forgotten folks God hath notice, and God hath care, and God hath a cross, and God hath salvation, and God hath a ladder built up into the skies, and God hath a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O, I wonder if there is anybody who, if he got that notion of God, would not fall in love with him? That is God. That is our God. Glory to his excellent name forever!

PRAYER: O Lord, God, bless us, hearten us, restore our lost faith to us. Give us God—the great, true, tender, affable, merciful, salvation-bringing, cross-lifting God—bring him to us, and then, O mighty God, bring us to him, in Christ. Amen.

## PRAYER

GRACIOUS LORD, our Father and our God, we feel thee. That is better than seeing thee. We have been long in learning that. We were slow as laden beasts coming up a long and dusty summer hill. We stumbled and loitered. We thought sight was best. "Show us the Father and it sufficeth," is our dull word as it was of one long since silent in death. But he, no doubt, learned larger things, and we praise thee, Lord of All, that we too are learning though with pathetic slowness. We feel thee. We feel thee when the way narrows and the paths are dark. We feel thee when the way widens and the sunshines leaps like spray along the near and far. We feel thee when we come on sudden exigencies which fret the soul and harrow it with harrow teeth of iron and we bleed like men wounded to the death. We feel thee when the fields are ready for the rain but no rain falls; and the dews at dark and through the dark refuse to fall. In drought thou art on us, in us, over us. Fast and free thou comest from afar and at a cry or tear or whisper of gladness, slippest across the threshold of our being and we are in God's hands, and he is in our house of heart, and we are his as he is ours. What shall we render unto the Lord for this feeling him with us and we feeling so sweetly at home with him?

We will fret no more but only laugh and weep and hold to God, even the living God. Nothing shall disconcert us forever in Christ. Amen.

## IX

### THE HUSHED PROPHETS

“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.”—*The Last Verse of the Old Testament.*

MALACHI lived four hundred years before Jesus, so that from Jesus back to Malachi and Malachi forward to Jesus was a silent era of four centuries. It was a strange silence, I think you will allow. From the days of Moses to the days of Malachi was a thousand years; a thousand years fairly glutted with history and with poetry and with battle and with prophecy. There was no space of silence—always a voice in the sky. Sometimes it was a shepherd who spoke; sometimes it was a king’s voice; sometimes a fig-grower’s voice called; sometimes it was a country voice; sometimes it was a city voice; sometimes it had the drip of tears; sometimes it clamored like ecstatic cymbals; sometimes it was the wafting of the quiet wind; sometimes it was the alarm of furious tempests, but always a voice. And all at once, silence! One century—where is the voice? No voice. Two centuries—where is the voice? No voice. Three centuries, and they sobbed: “Where is the voice?” No voice. Four centuries—voiceless as the dust.

And I am asking, What has hushed the prophets? What has stilled their clamor into peace? What has laid death finger across their lips? Oh, prophets, sing! Not a song. Oh, prophets, call! Not a call. Oh, prophets, whisper! Listen! Not a whisper. Silent! What has hushed the prophets? And I would have you observe that it was as if at a Gettysburg, which I think to have been the most clamorous mal-content hammer of thunder voices of battle guns that ever woke, sudden silence had come. I think that that artillery duel at that great mountain battle has no fellow in the history of fight—when the great black lips of cannon pursed themselves and spit death, and the sky fairly wallowed with the battle voices, crush, and crush, and crush, and then silence; not a gun spoke, not a cannon woke; only the smut of smoke lifted dull incense from the cannon's mouth. Such a silence!

Ten centuries of clamoring prophets' voices; and then without a fringe of word, until the whisperings even are no more, silence! O prophets, what ails you that you have grown so dumb? What ails you that you speak no more? Four centuries, silence! And I profess that the sense of the miracle of the Old Testament is, not that men were prophets, not that men with prophetic voice climbed on high like an army to the summit of a hill, and set a standard up; but that the miracle of the Old Testament is that the

prophetic voice is hushed. No voice. A thousand years of voice—four centuries of silence. A thousand years—that is as long as from the days of Edward the Confessor until now and past it. Think you this, men and women: What if we catalogue the authentic, magnetic, strangely thrilling voices of England for its thousand years of life? What was England doing? It was making a race. What was England doing? Contriving institutions. What was England doing? Building up liberty. Building thrones that by and by there might be a throne on which there sat no king, but on which sat universal manhood and womanhood. What was England doing? Constructing not a dress parade among the peoples of the earth, but constructing a principle that should abide because it was the dominancy of the single man bought by the life and blood of Christ. And that was a great era.

What if you chronicle the voices that spoke—from the timorous voice of Edward the Confessor and the bloody voice of William the Conqueror, from the shuffling voice of the imbecile King James to the rugged tumult of Cromwell's calling? But what if through centuries not a voice!

But I call you all to note that this Israel history of a thousand years was not like England's, but was even more cohesive and penetrating. England we could have gotten on without; Israel we could not have gotten on without. From



Israel sprang a King whose voice rang across the battle call of ages and said, "Peace, peace." And not a single gun thunders along the world this morning. And out of the loins of Israel came this man, this God-Man, Christ, whose walking through the centuries has guarded England's civilization and American statecraft. And for a thousand years these trumpet voices at the prophet's lips had been calling, calling, calling; and the listening ear had heard the calling, calling. And then the calling lip and the listening ear, and then the calling lip and the listening ear, and then the calling lip and the listening ear. And then—no call. What ails the prophets that they are still?

I do not find wonder in that men spoke. That is not my wonder. The wonder is when men hear God and never tell it; that is the wonder. The wonder is that people hear the universe speaking and give it no sibilant, and no outspoken word. What ails the prophets that they are hushed?

And you will note likewise that those old prophets, all we have of them is a voice. Never a face. Would that thrill your imagination, brothers, were you poets? Would that thrill your imagination, sisters, were you dreamers of dreams? Would that thrill you? Never a face, not one. How looked Moses? Guess. How looked Jeremiah? Guess. How looked Malachi? Guess. How looked Zephaniah? Guess. How looked Elijah? Guess. How looked David? Guess.

How looked Isaiah? Guess. How looked Amos? Guess. How looked vagabond Jonah, fleeing from the voice of God? Guess. Nothing but a voice, that is all. Will you paint the thunder's face? Oh, cunning artist hand, paint the thunder's face! Seize half the sky for canvas, mix the black pools of midnight pigments for thy black colorings; fling on the blue sky colors to frame it. Paint it! All of a sudden the artist fingers have lost the brush, and he doesn't know how to paint the thunder's face. The thunder has no face. It is a voice. And it puts its brazen bugle to its lips and puffs its huge cheeks wide out, and then it seems as if the very heavens had lost their rivets and crushed down the sky. The prophets have no face, but only a voice. What ails the prophets that they are still?

Now, Malachi stands on a mountain, leaning far forward and looking not backward—the gospel never looks backward—but forward. Our golden era is in front. The atheist's golden era is death and dull, damp-browed yesterday. Malachi is looking forward, off a cliff; looking forward a hundred years—aye, two; aye, three; aye, four hundred years. And what is yonder? One long space—desert. Not a voice, not a whisper, not a calling of the bird of the morning, not the ecstasy of the lute, not the drip of a harp. Silence. And then another cliff, red as the bleak shoulders of Judæa's hills, and on that far-off cliff another, and he says, "I am the voice." And

Malachi looks away into desert dust and smoke. What ails the prophets that they are still?

I submit that they may be quiet because they are talked out. Blessed is the speaker who knows when he is through. Don't let this people "Amen." But was there not substance for prophecy in those four hundred years? Yes. Was it an eventless four hundred years? No. Was it deserted of great occupants? No. In that four hundred years, from Malachi to the Voice, John, there came the invasion of Alexander the Great. There came the rise of Ptolemies in Egypt. There came the dominancy of the Seleucidæ. There came those bloody, tragical, splendid battles of the Maccabees. There came the rise of the Asmonean dynasty, which, committed horrid deeds, and culminated in the wicked, horrid Herod. And so you will observe that it was not because there was no substance for story in the four hundred years that a poet lifted not a pen. And it was not because there was no theme for oratory that the orator lifted no voice. What ails the prophets that they are still? And the answer, still I say, might be that they are talked out. They have told their story. They have rehearsed all the points in their oration. They have gone clean across the wide range of theme that possessed them. Maybe they are through. Maybe they have said all they had seen.

What have they been doing? Leaning, looking

for the Face. What have they been doing? Leaning, listening for the Voice; telling of the faces they saw and telling of the voices they heard. And now, maybe, they could get no nearer view of the Face and no more authentic hearing of the Voice. Maybe by no expert stenography could they put down one single jot or tittle more of the divine thought which could swim into their heart, like the seas run up the yellow shore when the tide is full and would return nevermore to the sea. They would not gabble nor babble like a brook, only speak when there was something to say, when their hearts burn, when their shoulders ache, when authentic prophecy crushed them to the ground; when there must be voices or they die; and then they said, "God hath said it." The silence may have been because they had spoken all they had seen and all they had heard.

Maybe they were silent because they had fully mapped out the geography of the future. This is an intelligent company and I need not therefore amplify; but I say this, that the ethics of the world are what those prophets were making. They were not on some side road leading to a nook in the mountains or the woods; they were not on some bypath that led to no important whither. These prophets, whether it was a shepherd or herdsman, whether Israel's king or Jeremiah in the pit, arm deep in the prison mud, were all sure that the road they walked was walking into the centuries. They were planning

with God for the future; they were telling the authentic principles of the ethics that dare abide. Socrates' ethics are all gone. We will not have them. Plato's ethics are a jest.

The ethics of Solon are all vanished. But the ethics of the Book of God—they are on the codes of the Christianized world to-day; they will be more indelibly on them to-morrow. Not one single item vanishes from the Decalogue. Not one single item vanishes from the thinking of the world; not one single voice from Sinai to Calvary that vanishes from the thinking of the world. These men had poured out in such a lavish wonder of might as astonished the earth. They had poured out such a consummate idea as this, that in the heavens was God and in the earth was the same God; one God on the earth and one God in the heavens, and the God of the earth and the God of the heavens was the Father of man, and that man must mind God, and that God would look to man, and that man's destiny lay in God, and that God would not forget him in the shadows at the edge of the earth or the fringes of eternity. But if man listened to God who made him, then peace that floweth like a river and rapture that singeth like the singing of the sea would come into the heart. Oh, that was gospel, was it? I marvel at it. With what divine insistency these prophets said, "Behave, behave, behave!" Elijah said it with the back of the sword; Elisha said it with a sound of a kiss, David

said it with the sweet drip of music, but said it. Behave, behave, behave! Mind God. Mind God. Thou shalt not do that which shall pollute thy neighbor. Keep thy heart in tune with the Infinite. Not an impersonal, aerial, skyey infinite, not that; not keeping in tune with a silly infinite, but keeping in tune with a divine Infinite whose breath is life and whose hands are full of resurrection, and whose eyes are filled with day dawns on the hills. Oh prophets, what quiets you? They said, "We have told all we know." Blessed is the man who keeps still when he is not sure what to say next; also blessed is the woman. Now, blessed are the folks who dare to speak things, dare to certify truths on whose altars they dare to die. Oh prophets, speak again! Not a voice. All mute—all mute.

The prophets, mayhap, are hushed because the remote nearness of Jesus smote them dumb. I would have you think of that. Four hundred years to bridge, but because they saw him coming in that remote nearness. Silent! Oh prophets, speak! And they are all on their faces, and their hands are on their lips, and they do not even look up. They hear his coming and are still. So far away, and yet the presence of him brings quiet.

Have you sometimes seen, sisters, brothers, when before the coming of the tempest the birds were mute? Every singing bird silent, the chip-

ping sparrows still; the linnet puts its lute away; the red breast robin flings his lyre among the grasses and is still. What ails the birds that they are quiet grown? The tempest comes. Prophets—quit? And the answer is that there cometh something majestical that puts all manner of music mute. O Christ!

And I call you to witness that this Malachi man—this man whose face we cannot catch, whose figure we cannot see, whose presence we are sure of—stands, like some colossal figure, on the summit of the hills, whoever looks and sees Christ. And this last chapter of Malachi says, “Sun of Righteousness,” and then silence, silence. Four hundred years, no prophet. Four hundred years, and then there came a singing mother. Ah, now! Ah, now! Has the prophet given way to the woman? Yes. What woman? The mother woman. The shouting prophet still, the clamoring prophet still, the fighting prophet still, the ecstatic prophet still; and then hush, hush! And there is a woman singing a lullaby, and she dreams a Babe is on her heart, and she holds her arms folded, as she did when she was a girl a-nursing of her dolly in the dusk. And she is singing a lullaby to such strange music that shakes the very heavens. And she is saying: “God hath exalted me that I should be the mother of his Son.” Lullaby! Oh lullaby, lullaby! Oh lullaby! And then the singing angels singing: “He is come. He is here. He hath come and he



is here." And the angels quit their singing. Oh prophets! And they are all still; but they were all listeners to the mother's song and the angels' song. It was that they spoke and it was toward that they looked, though they knew not all they spoke. And the angels' singing dripped out of the sky; and the last radiant drop of wondrous music splashed to the earth; and the angels were gone. And still they caught the mother music ringing; and in her arms now was not a dream Babe, but a baby Babe. And she leaned over, as mothers do and have done since motherhood began, and will do as long as motherhood abides. And she was kissing its cheeks and taking the honey from its lips, and she was singing: "Oh my Son! Lullaby! Lullaby!"

What wonder the prophets were still when the mother had singing on her lips! "I am mother of God's Son." Still.

Maybe they were hushed because they saw the sunrise; and if you will read this chapter out of which I read, and out of whose strange, pellucid well I dip a cup of water to pour out before your hearts, you will see that it says, "Sun of righteousness" will "arise with healing in his wings."

Maybe the prophets are still because out of that dark they see the morning, and where they held a candle out there God hath lit a sun. Ah, now! O you Moses and you Ezekiel, and you Daniel, and you Zechariah, and you retinue of men, what ails you, looking up? Ah, and Malachi sings;



and, honor bright, I can hear the trumpet voice of him trilling through the centuries. Heard you Tennyson say:

“Blow, bugle, blow,  
Send the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle, blow.”

It is a trivial bugle; throw it into the river or the sea. But blow upon thy bugle, Malachi! And he says, “The sun is up. The sun is up. Hurry—sunup.” That is enough, Malachi. Come, sit silent forever, Malachi. No more words from you. You have told it all. It was dark night; now it is daylight. “Shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.” Sunup; sunup. O Moses, O David, O Daniel, O Malachi! Say, what is the word? Sunup; sunup forever! Sunup that hath no sunset, but only noon. Ah, well, keep still forever. You need no other voice. Quiet.

Maybe the prophets are silent because their music was so commonplace. They heard the heaven lute playing. The Word! There had been a voice; the prophet was the voice. And the voice, it was an echo calling; only the Voice which makes the echo is singing. No, no, we need the Voice more than the echo. And the organist plays, and he does well to play. He has an instrument of strange resources in the realm called melody. He chants, he sobs, and has wedding march in the pedals and the stops. Oh organist, lift and lower, lift and lower. Oh

organist! But listen, brothers, sisters: suppose the organist's organ were beside the sea; and suppose he played his strange deep music till those that listened sobbed; and then suppose that the organ of the sea began to play and the stops of the organ were pulled out and the tremolo began to play, and the lyric voice began to sing, and the great, deep-breathed orchestral music of the mighty waves began to lift and swell and swell and swing. If the great organist God upon the great organ, the ocean, began to play, what would the organist with his man-made organ do? He would take his fingers from the keys and his feet from the pedals and would be mute, because the organ of the ocean was playing deep and long, wild and swelling notes of freedom, rising notes of clamorous wonder, great gulps of sobbing choking in the throat, and spilling in a cry. O organ, organ, organ! Swing and swell and sing and call! O organist, why are your idle fingers lying on the keys, and your idle feet hanging limp beside the pedals, and touching them not? And with his face pale with the wonder and the music of the organist God and the organ of the sea, he says, "They have put all of my music out." And these prophets heard Christ talking. And who is Moses, and who is Elijah, and who is Elisha, and who is Daniel, and who is Nehemiah, and who is Amos? Where are all of them? They have all stopped playing; they won't play a note for four hundred years. Christ hath put his

fingers on the keys and his feet upon the pedals, and he is playing. Listen! Listen! What chant is that? "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Prophets! They are hushed as death; but the organist Christ is playing, and the tune is, "Come unto me, all ye that are tired, and I will give you rest"—a pillow for your head, a staff for your journey, a bed for your dying, a sob for your sorrow, a song for your grief, an open door at the end of the dark of life into the daydawn and the rapture of glory. O prophets, you did well to be still.

And the organist Christ is playing yet, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

And the prophets all are hushed but the Christ's voice and music are not hushed yet, nor will be to-morrow nor will be forever, and forever, and forever, Amen!

PRAYER: O God, our Christ, we love thee this morning and bless thee that, though the prophets have been modest enough to be quiet because they knew the Christ was coming, and now that the Christ hath come there need be no other voice save Christ. Help us to hear the Voice and catch its music and see the morning and be glad.



## PRAYER

O LORD, we humbly bless thee that thou art so beyond all measure in thy kindness, in thy justness, in thy holiness, in thy love. Our gratitude can never equal what thou art and what thou hast been and what thou dost. Sometimes when we think how incapacitated our gratitude is it grieves us and shames us and abases us, and then again we think of this other matter, that thou art so great in thy benefits toward us that we cannot equal thy generosity without love; then we thank God and take courage and love thee because of thy love to us that has been unspeakable all our lives.

God loves us. He loves us so much he cares whether we fail or not; he cares whether we love him or not; he cares whether we want him or not, and when we give this matter a little thought, even this it is that saves us from being common folks. We are uncommon folks because God loves us.

And we bless thee, O our God, that thou hast come down through the centuries to-day to this house of the service of Christ. May we have come to meet God and may we meet him for whom we have come. Whatever our hearts may be, however hard they may be, however engrossed in business they may be; however surfeited with pleasure they may be; however frivolous and foolish our desires may be, O God, to-day may we come up into God's presence; to-day may we come up into God's love; to-day may our hearts be broken with the touch of the finger of God, may our hearts be melted to love, and may our lives be melted to forgiveness. O God, if anyone has wronged us, help us to forgive him to-day; if anybody has been specially unkind, help us to forget it and to forgive him to-day; if anybody has bruised us without cause, help us to forget that to-day. O Lord, may this day be notable with us because we have entered into conspiracy with God to be better than we have been, to love him more, to love people more, to lead a holier life, a more lovable life, a more generous life, and to forgive people so that God may be able to forgive us.

Bless us, O Lord. Bless our big city. Bless our big nation. Help everybody to move toward God, so that the city and the country may become the country and city of God's love. Bless our choir to-day, and while they sing these songs and while they lead the congregation in the singing, may the blessed calm of the blessed Christ abide in their hearts and may they have a joyous song within their hearts and gladness in the experience of God. Amen.

## X

### A PARABLE

“Another parable put he forth.”—*Matt. 13. 24.*

I WILL pronounce a parable.

A tall angel stood on the earth alone. There was not a touch of greenery on all the landscape far or near. The angel's face was like the light, and his garments were woven sunbeams, and he stood very tall and very serene, and when he spread his wings abroad it was like the spreading abroad of a white summer's cloud. And in the angel's right hand there was a kernel of wheat, and in his left hand an acorn in the cup. And the angel held dialogue with the grain of wheat, and this was the saying of it:

“The king of all this country designs to place some of his children here, and leave them for a space of years. They are now dwelling in his upper country, where it is daylight all the year round and all the day through, but because it is better for them here, and because he designs that they learn the art of making a livelihood, he purposes to place them on this earth. But that he may make this hazard he must have bread for them; and you are the prospective bread the king means to give to his children. And there will doubtless be great multitudes of them first

and last, millions and millions more and still millions besides, and on you must rest the toil and care and service of feeding this great multitude."

And the kernel of wheat said to the angel: "It is beyond the compass of my little power. I am but one. I am all alone. I am so little that hundreds of me would not give one of his babies a breakfast, much less feed the great multitudes."

And the angel said, "What the king commands that can be done."

But the grain of wheat said: "Who am I to feed so great a multitude? And what can my poorness do with so vast a table spread for so great a company? I am not equal to it."

And still the angel smiled and said, "What the king commands that can be done."

And the kernel of wheat said, "Then, if the king commands me, I will try."

And the angel smiled and his face was like morning when the sun is fresh in the eastern sky, and he took the kernel of wheat and sowed it in the earth and covered it over with the dirt. And the wheat lost all hope, for the darkness was so dense after he had seen the angel's face, and in the gloomy earth day in, night out, always night to the kernel of wheat. And in its heart it said, "I cannot; I shall die; I shall see the daylight no more."

And then, in the breast of the wheat kernel there came a pain like the stabbing of a spear at

a brave man's heart, and on a sudden up from out the heart of the red wheat grain came a spear of green, and peered above the ground and ran out into the dew and was watered by the dew and rain and shined on by the mercy of daylight and the gladness of moonlight, and it grew and still grew up into the air, and was the one green thing in all the landscape from sky to sky; the solitary trick of greenery was the small spear of growing wheat. And by and by it grew into a stalk, and by and by stood tall and stately and waved to and fro at the beckoning of the wind. And by and by upon its crest there came a head of wheat, strange in its arabesque and beautiful exceedingly, as if carved by some strange, gifted carver for a king. And then, as the days passed and the summer spent its life, this head of wheat grew strangely golden and exceedingly ruddy. And so the winds rocked it to and fro and scattered its grains out upon the ground, and then instead of one grain, there were hundreds.

Then there came the autumnal brawling of the tempests and the swirling of the wind and the hundreds of wheat grains lay under the dispensation of the stormy tides of winter. And sometimes in their hearts they sobbed as if they did not think they could live. But by and by the rushing tramp of the winter was past, and the fury of the gales sounded their bugles no longer in their ears, and then came the mercy of the spring and the soft south winds. And above



the ground came hundreds of spears of wheat. And thus the story rehearsed itself year by year and year by year, until at last a wide plain of the world that once was only a desert, barren as the barren sky, waved to the witchery of the wind and tossed hundreds and thousands—aye, a million—harvests and filled the granaries of the world. And then the king's children came and sat them down at the banquet of the king's table.

And the smiling angel said to the kernel of wheat: "Told I not you what the king commanded, that could be achieved?"

And then the king's children put the wheat into the earth again and harrowed it and spiked into his heart with the teeth of the harrow, and the days and nights, rain and shine, came and went, and the wheat grew tall. And then the king's children thrust in the sickle and the wheat stalk felt the pain from fierce smiting of the sickle as if of the point of a sword. And the golden glory of the wheat field lay low against the ground, and it seemed as if all its beauty were desolated forever. And then the king's children took the wheat so sawn asunder from its rich rootage in the ground and hammered it with flails till every kernel of wheat felt the stroke. And the king's children took the grains and flung them in the mill and the mills ground hard and furious, hard and furious, and bit the kernels of wheat into fine dust, and it seemed as if the dust

were so fine the springtime's wind would blow the dust away and not leave any food for any king's children. And then the king's children took the dust of the kernel of wheat and burned it in a furious oven and poured the fire blast on it, and the wheat felt in its heart, "There is no to-morrow, and there can be no service." But out of all this tribulation grew the breadstuffs of the world, and the king's children waxed fat, and the babies smiled, and the world laughed because the one grain of wheat had done its master's bidding.

This is the parable of the wheat grain. Life must always be as the grain of wheat. Every man and every woman can find a hundred reasons why he is so insufficient he cannot achieve the high designs of God. Our arms are not armed to do the Master's bidding; our fingers are futile. We know not how to finger at the harp nor how to wake the organ into streams of music. We know not how to drive the sword or thrust the sickle or thrust the plowshare in. We are so weak and so incompetent and the hazard of it is so severe that the fear eats into the heart and toil will not come at the command of our weak endeavor. But did you not mark, men and women, that the glory behind the little is that God hath ordered it? And when the king commands, then a man must dare aspire to do.

And in life there is much pain and in life there is much darkness; and as the wheat grain found,

every good life finds. There shall be darkness; the shadows thicken and the dirt piles over us as in a grave, and then we esteem there shall be no resurrection and no bright to-morrow. And then the rains pound down upon us and the sullen storms wash over us like the waves of some omnipotent sea, and we say we shall come to no to-morrow. But, O, heart, heart, if the grain of wheat got by and by to be the breadstuffs of the world, and if out of the exceedingly little wheat grain God brings the banquet for the king's children, do you not understand that out of your poverty of might there may be established a strange vigor that neighbors on omnipotence? We are here to mind the king. When the king commands we dare aspire. Heart and brain, what the king orders, that do not fear doing. We are not so weak but that with the established order of the commandings of the king we shall achieve great matters.

And we shall be bedded in the earth as it will seem; and we shall be cut with the sickle till the blood drips from the heart and face; and we shall be ground between the upper and the nether millstones of pains and toil and unrequited effort; and men shall jeer us down and some shall hate us and some essay to slay us; but the grinding wheels shall grind away as they ground the kernel into the dust of flour; and we shall be put into the fierce heats that try the soul, but out of it, bless God and by his mercy, there shall come

help for the world. You must not wonder that the smiling angel looked at the kernel of wheat he held in his hand and said to it over and yet over once again, "They who obey the king bring service."

And in the angel's other hand there was an acorn. And across all the hills and slant of many mountains and down the long, lone valleys and over the wide plains there was not the single shadow of a single shrub and not a single tree branch waved against the wind and made nesting place for any bird. And the angel looked at the acorn and held controversy with it and said, "The king needs shadow, and the king needs ships, and the king needs houses, and the king needs thee."

And the acorn in its cup said: "I am one and trivial, and such things as you design and the king desires are far and away and beyond me. What can I do? I pray you have me excused."

And the angel smiled and looked at the acorn in its cup and said, "What the king ordered that do you do."

And then the acorn said, "Let the king do with me what he will."

And then the angel took and dropped the acorn down beside a stone, and the dust of the stone fell on it, and the blowings of the wind brought fresh deposits of soil around it. And when the winter passed and the springtime came, up above the soil of rock and earth there came the ruddi-

ness of two trivial oak leaves that leaned together and later stood aloft to meet the kisses of the dew. And then the acorn cup smiled grimly and said, "How shall I make shadow and branches for the birds to build their nests, and how out of me shall be made houses for the many, and how out of me shall be contrived the keels to the great ocean-going ships?"

And the years came and went, and went and came, and the winds were angry because clean across the world they had found nothing to antagonize their goings until now. And now a sapling with a curious leaf flung up in antagonism to the storm winds blowing in the stormy sky, and they leaned out and whipped with their arms, and all the stormy winds rushed out, and the weary winds of the stormy North said: "Make way; we own the earth! Make way!" And still the oak sapling wagged against the wind and was not broken. And as years came and went the bole grew great. And as the years passed the arms of the oak tree spread against the mighty sky; and it looked up and saw through the lattices of the leaves the amethyst wonder of the heavens, and there was but one oak tree on all the earth, one oak. And on all the seas there were no ships and on all the land there were no houses, and in his hard heart the oak tree said: "I am an oak tree, truly, but who am I to house the world and give the birds place for their nests? How shall I do this?"

And then the angel stood beside and said, "What God ordered thou hast strength to do."

And then upon one summer's rosy prime there came a thousand and then ten thousand of shallow cups, each with an acorn in it, and when the stormy autumn came and drove on its course, then these acorns were blown across hundreds of feet of ground. "What now?" said the earth to the oak tree. And then came the storms of winter and the waters drenched the ground and sent those acorns miles and hundreds of miles around. And then in the end a great oak forest grew.

And the story need not be dwelt upon to know that in time to come the one acorn in its hollow cup grew to be a great forest. And men came, the king's children, and said, "We must have houses," and they took the brawny acorn tree's wood and the great trunk limbs and hewed them out into palaces, and in the blaze by the fire where the branches burned, the king's children laughed and made themselves glad. And by and by when the seas were outrageous and no man crossed them, then the king's children thought of the oak tree, and they went out and chopped it and brought it level with the ground, and took it for keels of ships on the sea. And through the oak tree's bulk, by and by across hundreds of seas alive with tempests, there came hundreds of ships that no leviathan wave could break nor the ocean rush could crush; though the oak beam cracked it did not break. And from land to land,

to every archipelago, and continent to continent the seas were bridged with ships; and houses were builded across the world.

And the king's children had calm and comfort, and builded houses in which when wearied by excessive toils they might rest in great security.

And then the smiling angel stood and looked the oak trees of the bewildered earth in the face and said, "What the king commanded, did you not do?"

Do you not mark by the oak tree sawn asunder and the hacking of the ax upon it, and all its glory of shadow and song laid low, and the things that had been now ceased to be, and into its bark and beneath it and into its very heart the hacking ax-pain came; but out of all the calamity of it there came the world's comfort and the world's shelter and the world's safety and the world's locomotion?

Why, men and women, what makes this story of the angel with the acorn and the wheat kernel to be the authentic story of every reputable life that ever drew breath? We are here. We are here—children only. But what hinders if the King have use for us? What hinders if we mind the Master? What hinders that we who have children's day now have maturity days? What hinders that we who be no strength now be stronger than ten strengths? And what hinders that we who are served now shall serve? And what hinders that we who are rained on by the

rain of civilization, and we who are rained on by the sunshine of Christ—what hinders that by and by, even here and now, we ourselves shall become vast mercies and under the branching wonder of our shadow shall men have comfort and have peace and fall asleep at weary noonday in our calm, and by our hands shall the whole world say I have had help? Ah, men and women, would you listen to the parable of insignificance that grew vast and divine? Would you hear the cry of the futile and the incompetent that by and by lifted itself up to the glory unspeakable of success?

And would you learn the lesson that the smiling angel said, "What the king ordered can be done"? O life, thou art so little, but shalt be so great! O strength, thou art so weak, but shalt be so mighty! O puny arm, one twist at thy wrist by a man's hand could break thee, but a giant's arm thou shalt become, so mighty that the hand of God cannot twist thee to the breaking. O life, life, the burning noons and the snarling storm and wild winds of the wicked North all past, and the sunny winds of the sunny South all blown, all the inclemencies, all the impotencies of the desert or prairie or mountain or beside the sea—what matters if behind it all is calling the King: "I need thee. I need *thee*"; and if behind it is the calling of the King, your Master, "I bid thee"; and if behind it all there is the master mind of my God, what odds?



And the smiling angel said, "What the king commanded, thou canst do." And the golden kernel of wheat which was like a golden pebble that a little child found glowing in the sun, came to be the granary of the world, and the acorn, that seemed to be a cunning trick of some dead lapidist, came to be the amazing shadow and shelter and fire and the shipping of the earth.

Life, take thy little load and run thy little best, and serve thy little opportunity, because out of it shall come divine to-morrows and days that have no sunsets nor any dark; eternities wherein thy life shall be service and thy name shall be song, and thy heart shall be rapture, and thine experience shall be peace. And the universe of life shall rise up and look in thy face and call thee blessed.

And the angel with his spread of wings, white and billowy, and wonderful like spreading wings of a summer cloud, shall look in thy face and smile with that smile that is as unevanescent as eternity, and say, "What the King bids, thou canst perform. And when the King commands, take thou his command for thine employment." And by the King's help, we will.

PRAYER: O God, let the parable of the preacher on the kernel of wheat and the acorn sow itself in our hearts and grow up wheat fields and oak forests for the feeding and shelter of the hungry lives, for the chastening and supporting of the

life in which we are. Help thou us, O, God, out of our weakness to bring forth might of service and hope for others and for God, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## PRAYER

OUR LORD and Saviour, we worship and rejoice. We always have theme for rejoicing and worship when we think of thee. We are thine. Thou hast created us after thy likeness, and when we lost it thou didst redeem us with thine own precious blood. We belong to the blood-washed. We are susceptible of great things and divine progress. We shall make our ultimate abode with thee. How can we do other than worship and rejoice on remembrance of what, in thee, we are and are to be?

So now, manifest thyself to our hearts which, whatever their failures, still pant for thee. Our tides climb thy shores. We know where we belong and are definitely directed for eternity to be like thee and near thee. Wilt thou consider in all our remissness of service and love that we never waver in what we intend? We intend to love thee utterly and serve thee bravely and encounter the beasts of Ephesus with a smile and do our allotted work in the spirit of the singing Christ, who, when he went out to die, sang a hymn as prelude to the cross.

Across our spirits at this hour fling the shining shadow of that holy cross and preempt our purposes in the sublime manner of redemption, and wing our laggard loves toward thyself, we pray in Christ. Amen.

## XI

### THE UNIVERSAL BUILDER

“For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.”—*Heb. 3. 4.*

WHAT stalwart ways of putting things this Bible has! My opinion is that it is the easiest book to remember that ever was written, and this grows out of the fact that it drives its utterances and its truths home through the brain to the heart into the conscience, like Achilles might have sunk his spear haft deep in an opponent's body.

Now, who wrote the book of Hebrews is not certain. Paul maybe, Apollos maybe, or some other; but this thing has emphasis—that whoever wrote it was a man who had a singular grasp on fundamental truths and a singular sufficiency in putting those truths so that anybody could see them and practically nobody could forget them. And this man, whatever his name, looked around the world in which he was a citizen and saw every sort of building and that somebody was the architect and artisan of each. He saw that nothing sprang up causelessly, and he further saw that the cause of the world's habitations was not a law, nor a force, but always a man. He saw houses built for domesticity; he saw temples

built for worship; he saw houses built for caravansaries for travelers; he saw houses built as the coliseum for the games; he saw houses built as homes of justice. He saw that always with a building was a builder. And as he heard the hammer and the trowel and saw the mortar mixers and the stonecutters and the marble quarriers and the roof spreaders, he was lured from the masonry and the carpentry he saw to the masonry and carpentry that was invisible to him, but very sure, and from the builder of human habitations of varied designs his swift mind ran with not only celerity but accuracy to the builder of the universe. He was a logician. His brain worked. He saw relationships among things. He saw that the vaster was not authorless any more than the inferior was authorless. He perceived with a bounding pulse, and, I think, with a clamorous hallelujah, that behind the artisans we saw was the Artisan we did not see, and behind the architects we saw the Architect we did not see, and behind the puny builders of evanescent things was the omnific Builder of things that abide forever.

Now, the only way we can explain the singleness of method in the world is to have singleness of Author of the world. If there had been many contrivers of this world, then, in nature, there should have been many designs. There would have been a thousand fractures and fissures betwixt one thing and another. We had failed

of cohesion. We had missed coherency. Our speech had been like the babble of a drunkard rather than the rational, intelligent reasoning of the sober man of sober mind.

There is in this city a banquet hall which seems to me very beautiful. If it had occurred in some European palace, travel-mongers would have raved over it. Some of us only rave over things European. We never can get our imagination to a state of inflammability over home products. Unless we take ship to find them, we don't think them worth regard. This banquet hall is very beautiful. It would have adorned the interior of any king's palace. Some artist contrived it. It is not the dream of congregated artists. Somebody had it in his blood and brain, and all things are contrived from all parts, and each part for all things. The chasteness of the pouring on of gold; the limning of forms that stand out as if their own invitality had been touched with vitality—these things do not proceed from severalty in authorship, but when things radiate from one brain, as the morning radiates from one sun. It is as if many artists of fine perceptions had of themselves contrived fine designs and each had swung the creation of his intelligent imagination and pencil or chisel upon the walls. As the melody of the Parthenon was the challenge of Phidias' dream, and the Parthenon sprang out of one succession of lordly conquerors on Olym-

pian days, so this Chicago banquet chamber has unity of authorship, and, therefore, the design, though complex, is complete, and does not deny in any part its other part.

Here, then, is this world; its sky, its floor, its lighting facilities, its inhabitants, its climb of mountains, its lean and spring of cliff, its maundering murk of sea, its rapture of daylight deluged with the noon—all these; still the particulars are beneficent and beautiful, and the integration of them all must have sprung from one brain and one hand. Here is man's body, it might have been ten feet high. It is not. The very insignificant detail of how tall people grow is not a fraction of some curious force working irrationally, but it is the direction of some chief architect. If a man were ten feet high, where would we get the bedrooms for him? If he were ten feet high, how would we arrange the diningroom and parlor for him? If he were ten feet high, how would we contrive hat racks sufficient for his altitude? If he were ten feet high, how would we get circumference for his head? The very fact that man is able to stop growing when six feet—only once in a while a straggler runs up toward seven feet, just to show what the human frame might do if it forgot to quit—just because we are familiar with these ordinary facts of life, we forget that there is a profound reason working through all. And why the human stature stops at such an altitude and why the human stature stops at such a circumference—those

are things to be taken into account with the sum total of things. They don't happen. He that made the human figure doubtless had an eye to the human house, and He who appropriated material enough for his world to grow the million and the million inhabitants of his earth, took into account symmetry and the human occupancy of human houses. He who built the world adjusted the man who was to be its resident with reference to the bulk of the world. If a huger man had been put on this earth, he would have been logy; if a lesser man had been put on this world he would have been blown away with a windstorm. The fact of the bulk of the world, and the other fact of the bulk of man, are associated, not simply details, but relationships, that never can be omitted from the careful thinking of careful minds, and the reason why man's bulk is appropriate to man's earthly house is that He who builded the house and he who builded the tenant is one, and not two.

It doesn't happen that the birds are adjusted to the sky. It doesn't happen that the eye is adjusted to light. It does not happen that the fingers are adjusted to touch and lift. It does not happen that the bones are builded on the most economical lines of effort and of weight to make for the largest and most efficient service. It does not happen that we have four fingers to one thumb instead of four thumbs to one finger. It does not happen that the thumb is an associate



with the fingers, so that one thumb does as much business as four fingers. It does not happen that a man's feet are adjusted to a man's stature; it does not happen that a man's eyes are adjusted to a man's looks; it does not happen that a man's nose is proportionate to the rest of his facial anatomy. It does not happen. If these things, significant as they are in themselves, had been done by various authors, we might have had a heterogeneous manhood, we might have had something which would have gone into museums and excited the laughter of passersby. But God is the one author, and the one originator, and the one dreamer of the world and of man that inhabits it. It comes to pass that all that is fits in with the rest that is. It happens that the air is adjusted to the ear; it happens that the music sounds not like the crash of tremendous thunderbolts, which breaks to music; it happens that the nerves have accord and have discord; it happens that the bones and the fingers and the nerves are a complicated system, to be sure, but one system equally sure. It happens that the thinking power of intelligence varies, and the powers of humanity vary. It happens, but not as a happening; it happens as the rafters have been flung across the open spaces of the house by some authority who dreamed them all at first. I beg you to consider there is unity of purpose in the world and him who inhabits it, and the reason that there is is because one Body made them all.

If there had been a thousand builders with a thousand plans, we had had heterogeneity; we had had promiscuousness; we had had a ribald world; we had had a world where bodies were maladjusted and physicality was maladjusted, and where a ponderous intelligence had broken down an imponderous physicality, or where a tremendous physicality veered because it had no relative intelligence in it. And the reason why the world is likable and lovable and artistic to be worked in and loved in and played in is because the playhouse was made by the same Architect that devised the player, and the reason why the world can be worked in is because the workshop is contrived by the same Architect who contrived the worker. And the reason why the hammer of the human fist can drive with all but omnific might the rivets through the world's armadas is because He who made the bulk of iron to be framed by human ingenuity and mechanical forces made the human hand with human might and put into it the sinews of sinewy, strength. There is no argument for the existence of the earth except it be in the same breath the argument for one Creator. I do not argue with what you call the correlation of force, but say it is one. We are not come from diversified gods—if there were gods—but from one God. We are not the promiscuous playthings of diversified divinities. We are not the playthings of the twelve gods who lorded it over Olympus. We

are one in plan, in heart, in purpose, in the vast forces that possess intellectuality, in the vast forces that possess physicality and the dynamic forces working in the realm of dreams. It has been contrived by one Body somewhere who meant that this world should be an affable house to the man who should be put into it.

We were put in the house by Him who made the house, and the Maker of all things is the one God. We have the sign of one intent. We are not simply fragmentary powers flung down around the world as if some angry multitude of deities had gone along the sky and flung down from their plethora of intelligence and position here and there a rudimentary phenomenon. We are not that, but somehow are as if the logic of our life had been begotten by the brain of one Contriver; and He who made our hands made our intelligence. He who framed the whereby to get the news of the outside world framed the intelligence to tell us how forces go on to other forces. He who made the muscles that run to the fingers and cover the bones and come to the shoulders framed the nervous system of the brain and of the spine so that it knows adequately what to do, not as if it were maundering and saying, "What is that?" We should be like frameless defectives and intelligences who could see a pathway and would not pull the laboring foot along the journey. We are adequate, we are apt; we seem somehow as if the same breath that

blew the sky blew us; we seem somehow as if He that put the rafters of the vaulted sky on high so we cannot touch them put the rafters on this imperial intelligence of ours. He has the mark of having created the world.

And somebody says, and wisely, I think—I find no fault with it—“I cannot grasp this Body you call God. I cannot understand a personality you call God.” My friend, I did not dream you could. I think it not strange that man should be baffled with that notion. People who are not baffled with the thought of God are not big. Big people, when they look at the thought of God, are hammered in the face by it. I have sometimes been where the wicked seas hammered me prostrate on the sands. I could not stand against the billows. I envy nobody’s intelligence who, when he looks upon the thought of a Universal Architect and a Universal Artisan and an Omnipotent Builder, is not baffled by it and who does not say, “I cannot grasp that thought.” Oh, friend, your trouble, if you will let me say so, is not with God, but with the house. If you could get away from the sense of God, you would not get away from the sense of bafflement. Our trouble is not primarily with the thought of God, but our trouble primarily is with the thought of us. We are here. This world is here. This world baffles us. We cannot argue with the stars. We cannot comprehend the flowers. We cannot pluck a petal

from a lily and reinsert it. Our trouble is not, therefore, if you will observe, initially with the sense of God, but our trouble is initially with the sense of the world. It baffles us. It makes us stumble. It harries us like a thousand hungry wolves. It barks in our ears and laughs us down like a million demons saying, "How came you and whence came this house?"

I design to suggest to thoughtful women and men that their chief difficulty is not God, but their chief difficulty is this world, and this gravitation and this astronomy and this botany and this chemistry. You have no more trouble in understanding the Maker of chemistry than you do the chemistry that is made. You have no more trouble in understanding the Maker of the ocean than you do the ocean that is made. You do not know anything much concerning anything. You have touched the rind of the world; you have tried to pare the apple we call physical things, but have only cut your fingers and have cut a little thread from the rind. You do not any more understand man than God. You do not any more understand your baby than the Omnipotent Creator of the Universe. You no more understand your wife's way of thinking than God's method of thinking. You are baffled, that is all. If the matter of believing in a God were a matter of putting up some complex claim whose complexity might snarl the soul and drag it down like a tower, I had granted that the atheist had the rock on which to stand. But that

is not the trouble, brothers. The trouble is not with God, but the trouble is we are begirt with inexplicables, and are in the midst of mystery, and are hounded down of things we do not know. And until you know more about life you have no argument to set up concerning the complexities of God. The rocks are solid. The seas are yeasty. The blue sky is above us. The air is atmospheric. The winds blow in the atmosphere. There is the realm of life; there is the realm of hate; there is the realm of fear; there is the realm of death; there is the realm of life. You no more know about the death of your baby than about its birth. You know no more about the birth of your baby than you do of its death. You do not know how the human soul occupies the human body. You do not know how the soul gets tired of the human body and moves out. You do not know whence the soul came any more than you know where the soul departs. You are perplexed, and you are like people who have their hands upon their eyes and are blinded, and say, "I cannot see." I can understand how people are bemurked and lost with the perplexing conception of God, but I humbly suggest, if they reconsider and see how they are bemurked, not because there is a God, but because there is a world, and because there are folks, they will find an easy pathway to the conception of a God. Our trouble is that things are here, it is not who made them. If you could destroy the conception

of God from the thinking world, all difficulties would still baffle us. Whence did we come, and why are we here? Your trouble is in no wise moderated by putting God out. The world is too big for us. We are baffled at every turn. We are like a man baffled by hostile forces, and he runs every whither. With a jab of spear, he says, "I will make my exit here." And lo, the Macedonian phalanx rushes out against his breast and the wild call of the mutilated soldier says, "Not here." And then he runs the other way, and lo, there is a cordon of spears which says, "Not here." And every way you go you are not manumitted from perplexity but engulfed by it.

I have known not a few people, and people of signal intelligence, who seemed to think we have only to remove things far enough off to render complex things simple; that, if you took a million million years to make a world, it would make the job easy. No, it wouldn't. Evolution has not eased up the problem of making the world; it has made it definitely harder, because it is so utterly perplexing to think of any master workman staying awake so long day and night doing the job of keeping the interminable forces interminably working. Anybody here who thinks evolution has eased up the problem of ontology is deluding himself. It doesn't help any. You cannot explain things because you elongate the time of doing. You simply elongate the per-



plexity. You cannot explain anything by long times. You cannot explain anything by saying, "Why, it was long centuries contriving." Why, friend, is that easing matters? It is not. That is simply whining at the hard knot. Some people seem to think they can cut the knot by saying, "It was done in the past." You ask man how he came here. He says, "Evolution"—the chemical changes in the anterior time of the world might have accounted for him. But where did you get another chemistry than the one you now have? Have you got two chemistries or one? Have the primary belongings of the chemical laboratories decreased or increased? Isn't the sun made out of the same stuff as the world is? Haven't they iron in the sun the same as in the ground? Haven't they got gold in the sun the same as in the ground? Why, we are just a piece of the rind peeled off the sun and thrown down in the sky a little. That is all we are. We are just a kind of back-door lot to the sun, and the same old chemistry obtains.

Suppose you say, "What made the world?" instead of "Who made it?" To which, I suggest, the answer is, we are not babes in the woods! We are not little codgers; we are grown folks! We are not talking silly talk—it is not what made things, but who, we know that. The child knows when he gets a top that somebody made it, and he says: "Who made it? Papa, did you make it?" When you see an invention you



say, "Who made it?" Here is the matter of the phonograph. What is that? Oh, it is the bottling up the human voice as if it were olives, and when you want a human voice you unbottle it and take out a human voice. You say, "What made it?" Oh, you silly, say, "Who made it?" Some brain made it. Exactly. But I will ask you something: What made the human voice? And I ask also if bottling up the human voice in a phonograph is not a mystery and requires not a "what" to contrive it, but a "who" to manufacture it. There must be a great inventor that knew something about the laws along whose trackways the universe runs, but you are not going to get any whither by asking "What made things?" but "Who?" And this man, whoever he was, spoke with vast sanity, and I think vast heartening, when he said: "Every house was builded by some man; but he that built all things is God." Here is the human eye, and it is pretty generally allowed that it is a very wonderful machine. Once in a while a man arises and says it is defective. So is the man. It is defective, but it does the business it is put here to do. But there are some people right now who have eyes rather telescopic and cannot see anything close. They don't see anything they don't want to see. They can't see the preacher on the street.

They cannot see human need when it is right close. They cannot see tears when they are

streaming down the cheek. We haven't telescopic eyes. We don't want telescopic eyes. We want human eyes. They say that the human eye is not microscopic. Neither are we. Some of us are nearly so. You have to look pretty hard to see us; but in the main we are terrestrial folks. We don't need microscopic eyes. We want terrestrial eyes.

I think I may insist that the most stupendous approach of human intelligence toward omniscience is when it climbs from the carpenter's tool and the carpenter's ladder and the carpenter's apparatus, wherewith he does things, to the Carpenter. He who made all things is God. But how God made all things—that is the secret. You say electricity is here. I know it. But who put it here? And we say electricity is here. You know that. But what is electricity? And I would ask you to define it. You say that it can make heat, or it can make power, or it can make chemie activity. But, friends, I didn't ask you a kindergarten question. I know about that. I didn't ask you what this electricity man did when his sleeves were rolled up. I said, "What is it?" And you said, "It is electricity." But you know no more. Oh, well, we haven't gotten very far. What the human intelligence wants, and I will say what the human intelligence in its long sweep of march will demand, is that it get past the dynamo and the electric current

to the Maker of the dynamo and the electric current. I will say that the human intelligence will never stop with the human soul, but wants to know the Maker of the human soul. I will say that the human intelligence will never stop with the mechanism, but wants to know the secret of the machine. It will never be handicapped by what is; it will forever and forever urge its feverish and majestic way to the *who*.

And the way this universe came, says this stalwart sayer of things, is that "he who made all things is God." And that is how it comes to pass, brothers and sisters, with the world that it has system and unity, and has an intellectual purpose and things are a part of an intellectual scheme, and the world has a moral purpose and things are a part of a moral scheme. The world itself, the running on of the beams of light, the shading of the meadows with the passing clouds, the everlastingness of the eternities, the spaces that are infinite, the solid ground on which we walk, the cohesions and adhesions of things—all these things are morally contrived. They are mortised together like a house or car; they are not thrown together with fragmentary ethical purpose any more than with fragmentary intellectual purpose. But if you understand that He who builded all things is God, then you understand how the universe is moral; then you understand how history in the long race is moral; then you understand how man in the long run

is moral; then you understand how man cannot help some time or other praying; then you understand how man cannot help some time or other biting his lips when conscience jabs him; then you understand how man, if he seem for a moment like a passing bubble on the tossing stormy wave, really feels he must not die, that he is not stumbling to his death but down into his hell, or into his heaven. Then you understand if God made all things, how it is all things in every way are "bound by chains of gold about the feet of God."

Sometimes I have stood on narrow straits through which the wild seas angered, have stood upon the borders of the rock, and have seen the waters crash, and on the northern coast of Isle of Man witnessed the boiling seas leap as if a thousand maniacs were mixed with their blood, rush on, forever on. What ails the rushing universe? And the answer is, it is made with the passionate power of ethicality and is rushing on ultimately to fulfill the plan that was put into it by the Almighty Builder. House of the old world, house of the blue sky, house of the checkered grouping of the multitudinous flowers; house of the ripening apples and the ripening pears, old world, with your fractured floor and your volcanic crust and your snowy roof and your evergreen forests and your singing water brooks and your singing children; old earth and old civilization, with your feet planted back upon

the ledges of early history and with only your bosom showing above the crest of the mountains with your chin appearing through the mist, are voices calling on the breezes, "God hath made us." O soul, with thy wicked will and with thy freedom of holy purpose; O soul, with thy faith and heart unafraid to die, God hath made thee. O world; O history; O centuries; O civilization; O souls; O theology; O love; O hope; O faith; O religion, God—one God hath made ye all, and so together ye shall work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

And I hear the hammering of the hammer of God, and I hear the breath of the Almighty Architect coming hot as he makes his wondrous house, and I hear him breathing upon human souls and saying "I make you like me"; and I hear him saying to his angel workmen: "Frame the house of heaven, for I will people it by and by with people from my world, who are made like unto me. Their earthly house is but a tent and the wind blows through and snarls the tent walls into ravelings. But I will build them a house eternal in the heavens."

And what was it, what was it that the man said when he heard the workman at the scaffolds of the world's house, what was it that he said? He said: "Every house is builded by some man. Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God."



## PRAYER

FORSAKEN! O my Lord, we are left all alone. My heart is desolate. My moan is sole minstrel. Death hath clutched at the hand I loved the most and, raging, hath taken my beloved away. The house is empty; the hills are sad; the prairies at flower of spring are to my desolation but a sandy waste; the city of my heart is dispeopled—not a child playing and singing in its forsaken schools nor any woman singing at the window at her work, nor any man digs in the street—Desolate.

“My house is left unto me desolate.” I know what that saying meaneth now. O my beloved, speak, answer from thy far rest place among the beatified. No word nor any touch.

Forsaken!

And then, O Lord of every mercy, I read with fiery eyeballs and with blistered heart, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” Even so, even so. Thus do I find it. I am alone and very desolate but not forsaken, thanks to the God of all compassion. The Lord hath taken me up and I sob on his heart and fall asleep, as one whom his mother comforteth. Alleluiah. Amen.

## XII

### THE GARDENER

"She, supposing him to be the gardener."—*John 20. 15.*

ON Easter morning Mary Magdalene was very early at the grave of Christ. Her heart ached so that her woman's timorousness was overborne, and through the darkness before the dawn she found her way for her festival of sorrow at the grave of Christ. She came to anoint the tomb with her tears. She came to sob the solemn melody of a woman's heartbreak over the Son of God. And finding the grave empty, and finding the angels at the tomb when she had thought to find Christ in the tomb, she could think only one thing, and that was that He for whom she had come had departed. And she turned away dismayed. No presence of angels can make up for the absence of the Christ. That was what Mary knew. That was a vision worthy of a woman's heart, that no multitude of cherubim or seraphim can be an equivalent for the Christ. And she turned her away, and as she turned about, head hung down, eyes swollen with weeping, heart breaking with sorrow, Christ met her, and she, looking up through the very drench of tears, thought he was the gardener.



Now, that is the poetry of the situation. And I think it engrossing poetry. Such is the fact of the situation; but it is none the less engrossing poetry because it is fact, but rather more. Fact is the most poetic of all things below these bended skies of blue. And we might look at this incident this way, treat it cavalierly, speak harshly to Mary or of her, say that was what we might expect, that this was a woman's way, to speak before she thought, to consider afterward, if at all. She took Him to be the gardener, who was in truth the Lord God Almighty. And you might apologize for her. You might say her heart was broken; and you might say her eyeballs were seared with the burning touch of the finger of sorrow. And we might exculpate her from her guilt, and we might excuse her for her mistake. Or it might be that, womanwise, Mary didn't think her way through things, but felt her way through things with that splendid spring of passionate womanhood called intuition that gets the truth when men see it not. Maybe Mary in her heartbreak and in her mistake has come closer to the poetic heart of truth than you and I could do with all our coldness and with all our certain logic. She thought He was the gardener!

And when we give the matter heed, He was the Shepherd. Why might not He who was the Shepherd be a gardener? Why might not He that took the unweaned lambs in his arms and gently cared for such as were with young, why might

not He who went across the hills of Bethlehem at early dew of morning wooing the sheep with his voice, why might not He of the garments of the shepherd drenched with the odors of the night, as if touched with starlight and the morning's dawn, why might not He that is the Shepherd be the Gardener? And in any case, certain we must be when we give matters deliberate consideration that Mary's woman mistake lifted itself into the very sky of poetic beauty and showed the poet's vision that comes through a woman's broken heart. Beloved, it is so that sorrow gives sight. It is so that some things cannot be seen through happy eyes all dry from tears; it is so that the broken heart gets eyes qualified; it is so that a broken heart is a good oculist; it is so that the brokenhearted sometimes are competent to see what the wholehearted are incompetent to behold. And the truth, the beautiful, witching truth, is that Jesus is the Gardener, that this Shepherd is the Gardener likewise.

Now, the gardener has his workingman's coat on him. She mistook Jesus for a workingman. She mistook his garments for the garments of toil. No, no. Haste slowly, beloved. Halt what time you speak. She did not mistake. Christ had work clothes on. He never had a princely coat. He never wore Sunday clothes. He had no change of coats. One he lived in, one he wrought in, one he died in; one garment they gambled for below the merciless cross. Mary did not make a mistake.

Here was the Gardener with his hands covered with the dirt of earth. Here was the Gardener with his face all sweaty, howbeit with blood. Here is the Gardener. O Mary, Mary! And she says, "I mistook him, and it was my tears misled me." Ah, Mary, Mary, it was your tears and your woman's heartache and your woman's vision that really led you. We didn't know it, and we couldn't have said it, and I firmly infer we men could never have read that riddle out. We others would never have guessed this was the gardener. O Mary, Mary, your mistake climbed to the topless top of the topless hill of truth. And I bless God it is said "she supposing he was the gardener."

Now, a gardener believes in certain things. First, he believes in the ground; second, he believes in the seeds; third, he believes in the sky; and, fourth, he believes in the tending.

The gardener doesn't say the dirt is prosaic. He doesn't care to anger at the dust. He doesn't say mud is a blemish. He loves the dirt because the dirt is that without which flowers could never grow. Some people are elate over marble. The quarries of Carrara, or Pentelicus, with their whiteness of wonder and their wonder of whiteness, seem to them to be ecstatic. Ah, but no lilies root in Carrara marble, and no roses grow out of Pentelic marbles, and no lovely flowers root themselves in the lonely crevice of lovely Carrara. It is the common dirt, this blessed everyday ground, this where the vegetable garden

grows its herbs, this where the common weeds sprout and lift, this where everybody walks, this where everybody knows that all must grow. The gardener looks down; he espouses the dirt; he knows how worthy the earth is. He says in better fashion than John Burroughs knows that dirt looks good enough, in the springtime, to eat. He says that this dirt is relative to the flower and the harvest and the fruit and the vineyard and the leafing of the tree and the shady forest. The gardener has no arguments against the dirt; he has no antagonism to the common ground. Its very commonness is its comfort and its very prevalence is its vastness of largess.

It is so clamorous that everybody must have a flower. Some people never feel good about anything unless it is one out of a multitude, when nobody else has it. If they could have a diamond, that is wonderful, but everybody can have a fistful of violets in the spring; but they are just violets. Ah, me, but the Gardener, he puts his wistful wonder of his smile upon the ground because out of it grows community of interest for the world. Cry? Babies cry for bread. Aye, here is the ground and here is the Gardener. You shall have a table spread. The hungry men toil with their sweaty labor till they are sweat-drenched, and then they call out for bread, and the Gardener says: "The ground is working for you." And the toiler ceases his toil, the table is spread, the bread is of the ground. Why, the

ground is the benefactor of us all. We shall be better off after a while, truly. We must walk on it here, truly. We must ask it for our daily bread, truly. There is no daily bread grown from diamonds or from quarries of marble, nor from mines of gold. No bread groweth there. And you might own a solid globe of gold and die of utter hunger; but if you had an acre or two of dirt, thank God, come little laddies and lassies, come little children of my love, we may go and pluck the flowers that bloom, and we may go and pluck the things for breakfast. And if anybody here ever was out of doors in the country, where he had a lot of backyard, and a bit of garden ground, where he could grow a little radish, and even have, for perfume, an onion, and then a potato here and there, and then a stalk of corn, and when he came out in the early morning, when the dew was prevalent, and every leaf had its drop of jewelry, more radiant than ever shined on lady's throat—went out and said to the wife, "I will go out and get the vegetables for breakfast; I will go out and get the vegetables for the day," out for the picking of the peas, and to the gathering of a few radishes, and out to the getting of a little lettuce—oh, isn't it cheap business to go and buy garden stuff off of a grocer's counter when you used to go and pick it out of the dirt—radishes, lettuce, apples, splendrous with the sunset hue? Oh, I think betimes if the gardener didn't believe in common dirt we should all be

lost. I will bless God while I live to tell my story of the Christ, that he dug in the common ground, and made it to flower and fruit.

He did not have many geniuses to traffic with; he had only the everyday dirt. It needed much fertilizing sometimes, was scant of depth sometimes, but the Gardener was there, and we said: "O Gardener, don't take trouble with us; pass on. We are not worthy; the others need it. You shall find rich fruitage out of some one else's life." But the Gardener leaned over the common dirt of our life and said: "This soil will grow flowers of paradise"; and he said, "This soil will grow fruit of Eshcol, and the grapes the giants bore on stooped shoulders shall grow on this." O Gardener, Gardener, can you farm my soil? O Gardener, can you out of the common ground of my life grow lily flowers? And he said, "It is dirt, the dirt out of whose lavish wealth there grows feeding of the world." People who do not believe in the dirt won't grow democracies. People who don't believe in the dirt won't grow churches. People who don't believe in the dirt won't grow poets. Poets all grow out of the ground. There never was a poet yet of any magnitude that came from a kingly house. They all grew out of common dirt. People that don't believe in the dirt cannot grow constellations of virtue; people that do not believe in the dirt cannot populate heaven; people that do not believe in the dirt cannot colonize eternity. The

Gardener! His sleeves are rolled clean to the shoulder, and his hands are brown with common dirt. He has been digging in the soil, the soil of thy heart, and mine, thank God.

"She thought he was the gardener." And then the Gardener believes in the seeds. A seed is God's package of life done up in a little bundle. I will say that the most appalling miracle on this earth is a common flower seed or a grain of corn, or a wheat grain. What is in that? It is a grain of wheat. What is in that? Bread for the world. A grain of corn—what is in that? Fodder and grain for the herds of the world. True. And every seed is life, that is it. The gardener believes in the dirt, but he believes in the seeds, and he knows that the dirt cannot of itself grow life, and he knows that in order to have flowers and forests, and to have garden stuff, or cereals, food to flood the world with wealth and wonder, you must have a seed. And the gardener is no agnostic. He does believe in life outside of the ordinary. He believes in the seed. He does not stand and argue with it; he does not haggle over trivial particulars. He does not say: "I do not see how the seed can sprout. It is a dull, poor thing to look at, looks only like a pebble—I don't discriminate it from a pebble. I don't see how it can grow. I cannot see how one seed should grow sunflower, and another seed should grow morning-glories, and how another seed should grow the glory of the lily. I



do not see that." But he believes in the seed, and when he wants a lily he does not plant a pumpkin seed. He does not say, "In the laboratory of the chemist, these things are identical." That is so. The chemical laboratory talks about all seeds as being alike; and it is so that the most expert chemist cannot tell what sort of a thing will grow out of what sort of a seed. And you give any chemist a seed, notwithstanding his proficiency, and say, "You tell me, what will this seed mother?" And he says, "I am busy now, and all seeds are alike to me, and all amount to the same thing under the chemist touch"; and he says, "when I have leisure"—and he cannot tell. But this seed here, it will grow a blue cornflower; and this seed here will grow a poppy, crimson as if drenched with the wine of sunset; and this seed here will grow a grain, or an oak tree, or an ash tree, or a wheat field—but you cannot tell which till you try. "Why," you say, "an acorn will grow an oak!" Ah, truly, wise friend, you do know, because you saw the gardener doing it; you saw what kind of a seed he planted when he wanted to grow the oak tree; but if you had seen an acorn and had never seen its relationship to an oak you could not, with all your wisdom, discriminate what tree would grow from it. You can never tell. I could never dream. And the gardener is a man of faith in the seed, and he sows what sort of seeds according as he wants to grow



what sort of things. When a man wants to grow pansies he doesn't get tomato seeds. You must get pansy seeds.

And you say: "How can you discriminate between the seeds? Are you a master in protoplasmal life?" "Oh, no," he says, "I have just got sense. Give me ten cents' worth of tomato seed." And it is surprising how far ten cents goes when you buy ten cents' worth of tomato seed. A little sense outclasses all the vagaries of philosophy. The gardener believes in the seeds. "True," you say, "but some seeds won't grow things!" Ah, I know that, but some will. You say: "I know sometimes seeds won't sprout at all." Yes, but lots of seeds do sprout. You know one spring when you planted corn, but the whole planting stayed under ground. You remember that too. What did you do? "Planted it again," you say, "because the gophers got it, or the ground was too wet, and it didn't sprout." You just said: "That is no good." O Gardener, what are you doing? And he said: "Planting a seed." And he is planting a seed, and it is the seed of love; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of kindness; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of courtesy; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of refinement; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of hope; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of endeavor; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and this is the seed of

song; and he is planting a seed in the soil, and it is the seed of faith. O Gardener, you are so tired! "No, not tired," he says, "just occupied." And you go and talk with the Gardener, and he will not stop, and he will not stand and look at you, and he will not say, "Come on to the porch and let's sit in the shade," but he will say, "Excuse me, I am at work, planting the seed." O heart of sorrow, there is a seed that the Gardener will plant in your heart, and it will grow up a song. Oh, Gardener, do you toil all day? "Yes," he says, "the nighttime too." O Gardener, toil you in the early spring? "Aye," he says. "In the autumn also." O Gardener, toil. Forget not my heart, it is so gloomy with sadness. "Aye," he said. "I will plant in thy heart a flower." Thank God!

The gardener believes in the soil, and he believes in the seed, and then the gardener believes in the sky. He knows that flowers root in the soil, but grow into the sky. He knows that flowers don't root in the sky and grow into the ground; he knows that. God's gardener never inverts his processes; he never subverts principles of common sense. God is the master of the common-sense philosophies of the world; and you can always tell with absolute ease of substantiation whether things are of God by whether they are sensible; for if a thing is outrageous, if it snarls your common sense, then you know that thing is not of

God, because God does not say: "It does not make any difference whether you plant a seed in the sky or the earth; it is just as you say about it. If you think to plant the seed in the sky, it will grow as in the ground if you just think that way." But we have a Gardener that has gumption, and he plants his seed in the soil, and he knows the sky; and he plants the seed in the soil, and the sky begins to whisper and whisper and whisper and whisper, and the seed so dead asleep cannot hear it. And because the seed cannot hear the whisper, March and April put their trumpets against their lips and the wild winds blow gales and the seed under the sod says: "Oh, who called me? Say, did I hear my name?" And the March wind blew gales fifty miles an hour, and the dust curled in the sky, and some trees blew down under the fury of it. But, oh, the west wind had to blow thunder blasts because it is time for the seed to be getting into the sky. And the seeds turned in their couches and said, "Who called me?" And then the wild west wind clamored, and the red rose seed said, "I heard my name; I am invited to the sky." But the Gardener Christ does believe in the dirt, and in the seed, and in the sky. Some people are good believers in the dirt and frank believers in the seed, but have no sky, and say, "I am a matter-of-fact man and believe in the ground, to be sure, and in the seed, to be sure, but I am not a skyey idealist." Oh, but the

sky—it is leaning over and saying: “Faster, climb to me. Come on.” That is all.

And if you ever plant a morning-glory seed—which I advise you to do for the sheer pleasure of it—you will notice that it is a poor thing, brown and hopeless and almost formless in shape or in beauty; but put it in the ground, and the sky will call it, “Come, come.” And if you and I hear what the gardener doth, you can hear the morning-glory flower saying, “I am coming.” It is like the sleepy voice, that is only half awake, or not quite half awake—“Who called me? Was I called?”

“Hurry, hurry!” says the wind.

“I am coming.”

“Hurry, hurry!” says the wind.

“I am getting my things on,” says the flower.

“Oh, hurry, hurry, hurry!” says the sky.

And then above the ground comes the flash of leaves. And then, if you care to mark a miracle, all foul and dispirited, and out of humor apparently with all the world, and with itself included, the plant looks down, lips clamped together as with an iron band; and the sky says, “Cheer up! Come on up here, I am waiting for you to flower up here,” and then the leaves expand, and the sprangles fling out, and the tendrils climb and climb. O morning-glory flower, where are you going, morning-glory flower? And the morning-glory says, “Into the sky, into the sky, into the sky!” Tendrils flung out, climbing on whatsoever thing

there is to climb on, the living branch on the wire netting, or the string the child put up, but always climbing into the sky. And the ground says: "You belong down here; you seem to be getting aristocratical. You belong down here. I am your mother." And the morning-glory says: "Aye, but the sky is my father. I belong to the sky." And when the summer comes, and the autumn approaches, there is the morning-glory with its varicolored trumpets of flowers, and every trumpet, if you had the ear to hear it, and the ear of the poet to listen to what it said, would say, "I belong in the sky!" And the gardener believes in the sky.

And then the gardener believes in tending. The gardener knows that the sincerest poetry of life is just digging around in the dirt, just that! O beloved, don't you folks get tired just doing the same thing all the time? Woman, have you ever been known to make a word of remark about the dishwashing coming three times a day? Have you? Have you been heard to say that you didn't so much mind to cook, but that the cleaning up hampered your finer sensibilities and that your æsthetical tendencies were hampered by the dish cloth? And if it came only once a week, not to say three times a day, and if there are children, ten times a day, there might be some comfort in preparing a meal; and the garments are around, and the stockings must be fixed for the feet, and the dinner must be fixed

for the lips, and things must be done over and over and over and over. And I confess that I feel with anybody who gets tired of the eternal reiteration of things. But what is the Gardener doing? Oh, what he did yesterday—digging in the dirt, digging dirt, tending. O Gardener, blessed Gardener, don't get tired digging in the dirt of my heart. O blessed Gardener, don't get tired sowing the seeds in my heart. O kind Gardener, don't forget to furnish me a sky. O Gardener, drench me with thy rain, and enswathe me with thy dew. Sweeten my breath with thy south wind's gust, and shine the lamp-light of thy stars on my sleeping face; turn the wonder of thy moonlight on the place where we are trying to get into thy sky, and waken me with the wonder of thy winsome look through the eastern window of my heart. O Gardener, don't get tired of tending to my garden. He says, "Don't worry, I never will!" Gardeners go to bed and sleep, but our Gardener stays awake all the day long and all the night long.

And, beloved, I would have you mark that the gardener grows things. "She thought he was the gardener." I will talk of the flowers that the Christ Gardener grows in the heart. One of these is the crocus. It is the earliest flower of the lawn. It blooms close against the winter. It barely waits till the last winter wave laps on the shore—and there is the crocus. Thank God, there is a flower the gardener hath that does not

wait till spring is here, but grows ere spring has come—gives a prophecy. Some of you people have not call to wait, you are anguish-bound, you are winter-girt, you look afar, and the hills are still clad with snow, the gray skies lower, the falling rain is snowflakes, and you say, "Winter, winter, winter, winter!" And then the Gardener, so that we may not die from the winter and being winterbound and stormbound, and snowbound, where the winter's drift is barely vanished, displays the crocus blooms. Oh, the Gardener plants in the heart the crocus flower.

And then this Gardener plants in the heart the pansies. "Pansies, that's for thoughts," said Brother Shakespeare. Does the gardener plant thoughts? Quite true. Do we chance to need flowers, any of them, more than thought flowers? None. The Gardener, whose name is Christ, is planting thoughts, thoughts of a better life, thoughts of a day undimmed of despair. Truly. Thoughts of service. Truly. Thoughts of a life that has no weariness. Truly. Thoughts of a day that is not dark. Truly. Thoughts of a prayer a heart may offer that shall bring somebody help. Thoughts. The trouble with the theater, I allege against it—not prating, but naming the truth—is it has next to no thought. It is empty-headed. It has no wonder of brain; it does not school people to thought, brave thoughts, and to entertain "thoughts that wander through eternity." It makes for intel-

lectual lassitude; it turns people from brains to eyes.

And then the Gardener plants heartsease. Oh, maybe you need that flower—heartsease? What ails your fingers, beloved, that you clutch them so tightly? What ails your breath, that it stops and then hastens like the beating of a diseased heart? What ails your voice that it breaks like an instrument out of tune? What ails your hand that when you reach out to a friend, then all of a sudden you turn your face away and your hand shakes, and you say, “Excuse me, excuse me”? Oh, well, you have heartache, and you need heartsease. And then the Gardener, this beautiful Gardener, this blessed Gardener, he is planting the flower called heartsease, and it is for the heartening of mankind. O heart, hast thou this heartsease flower?

And then this Gardener plants the red rose of love. Every heart hath room for its red-rose flower.

And this Gardener plants the amaranth—that is the flower of immortality. And when day darkens, then we take the amaranth flower of purple, and put it up before our sight, then we know time cometh when the curtain of dark is not put down and when the dull lamp of evening star is snuffed out by daylight.

And then this Gardener plants the flower of the lily, the white flower of a blameless life. In this a bad life, and bleak? And in that dull,



dear garden ground he plants the seed, and lo, there is the white flower of a blameless life. Truly.

And then there is the lily flower of resurrection. I cannot pass this place. I must go in. What place is this? It is an acre. Yes. Whose is it? God's acre. And I must go in. It has winter on it. And, all wonderful enough, when you go in, to find the dull grave you left and wept across with broken heart, it is all grown white as the moonlight of June with lilies of the resurrection.

O Mary, Mary, you knew it, you saw it, you said it, for us. This is the Gardener. O Gardener, with thy smiling eyes, O Gardener, with thy smiling lips, O Gardener, with thy hands all clad in toil, O Gardener, come my way, and farm my ground and plant my life and make my heart to be a place where grow the pansies and the crocuses, where grow the amaranth and the lilies, and the red-rose flowers of life. O Gardener, stay by me, keep thy tryst with me; stay by me till the dusk has given place to dawn.

Beloved, may thy Gardener go with thee, and he will do thee good. O Mary, Mary, what thought you, Mary? "Oh," she said, "I thought he was the Gardener." Upon my word, beloved, she thought not amiss. He is thy Gardener, and he is my Gardener. Amen.



## PRAYER

"UNDERNEATH are the everlasting arms." We have read that somewhere, and where could that somewhere have been save in thy Holy Book, O Lord, our God, excellent in all the earth and in all the heavens? Such words do not fall from any lips save the lips of God, and from no word save his Holy Word.

"Underneath are the everlasting arms," thanks be to thee, O Christ. "Underneath." When we are in a sea wreck and the ship is battered and the masts are broken and we are tossed like splinters on the treacherous waves which bluster and hurl and break and toy with our lives in livid fury and laugh at us while they slay us and crush their brutal fists in our faces and we fall, sinking into the utter depths of the utter sea, and all their waves are gone over us, and we shall see the light no more—then *underneath* are not the drowning depths of the drowning sea, but underneath are the Everlasting Arms, the Christ-God's arms. And we fall not into the depths but into the arms. Our mother's arms would be so sweet, so sweet, our father's arms would be so strong, so strong. But thy arms, O Lord, the everlasting arms, are underneath me when I sink, and I shall rise again. The seas shall not wash me down. I shall not lie with ribs of wreck on sandy shores. Underneath are the everlasting arms of the everlasting God, and so am I borne up and toward my desired haven for which blessed be my God forever. Amen.

### XIII

#### GOD'S FULLNESS

"And of his fullness have we all received."—*John 1. 16.*

I HAVE never been so pulseless in my spiritual life but that, however dull I was, when I read this I had resurrection. "And of his fullness"—God's fullness—"have we all received." When that puts hands on me then I lurch toward being a man. There is no excuse for the empty life. If we have access to the fullness of God, I hope we all shall see, and I hope we shall all feel, the excuselessness of the empty life when it could have access to the fullness of the mighty God.

Suppose that a bay of the sea, wide, deep, available for a harbor, with dented shore and high bank, calm harbored—suppose a gulf like that dry as a skull, not a drop of water in it, great armed like New York harbor, harbor meant for the wonder and the laughter of the sea, but all dry. Here and there might be pools of rancid water; here and there mounds of sand beaten with the fists of the wind; only a stray spray of grass, tossing idly when the wind comes languorously by; no water, no music, no rocking of the ships, no rowboat sagging in the water; no bulk of great merchantman that had tramped

across the world in his wide wandering with commerce in his laden arms. None of that. Only bleak pools of shifting sands. Suppose that. And then remember you are also to suppose that waiting to get into the harbor's depths, and wander all along the shore's indentations—waiting for that—was the sea, blue, billowed, universal, glad holder of ships, pathway of commerce, dream of romance, poetry of trouble—there stood the sea waiting to deluge the dry and shifting sands with the wonder of the blue, brackish water of the momentous ocean. Listen, beloved; O listen! What excuse could the indented shore and deep bay offer for being dry when the sea wanted to get in? What excuse? No excuse. And man is that wide, dry shore line. And God is that billowing sea.

Or, suppose that the cup which holds Lake Tahoe were dry as dust, with great deep hollows which the hand of God in one of its laughing moments hollowed out—suppose it were dry as dust. But there stand the mountains crowded with snows, and down the mountain gullies sing the laughing streams, and the inroad of the sky and the adjacency of the mountains and the shelter the pines give to the snowdrifts—all wanted to fill the dried-out cup of Tahoe full of waters. And tell me this: What excuse could Tahoe give for emptiness when the mountains stood ready to pour snowdrifts down to fill it full, and the streams ran, eager to pour their crystal waters

down and fill it full, and the pines sobbed, saying, "We are waiting to make thee a drinking cup for the gods"? Answer me this: What excuse could Tahoe's cup give for being empty when the mountains and the skies and the pines and the clouds and the snowdrifts and the streams wanted to fill it full? O life! Man is that dry cup of Tahoe, and God is the mountains and the sky and the clouds and the pines. "Of his fullness have we all received."

I am not here to argue about the indemnities due human life. I am not here to argue that human life is bankrupt and that there is not even a cent to be paid on the dollar. I am not here with any design to argue this case, but to allow, in its most drastic severity of type and form, that man is undone; that he is a violin with the strings snapped; he is a piano with the music all gone, as if it had been in a flood; he is an organ with all the organ stops and keys and pipes broken. I will allow that this morning. And all that I am saying is that, damaged as he is, broken as he is, lost as he is, he need not stay so, because "of his fullness" may we all receive.

And what I am bringing this morning is sunlight across the water. Hope for the worst man, thank God; hope for the weakest man and woman, thank God; hope for the bankrupt soul, thank God; hope for the bleeding hand and broken heart, thank God. The worst, you are? No

matter. He is bigger than the worst. Isn't that worth learning? "Of his fullness have we all received." O John, if you wouldn't mind, we are so anxious, and our hearts ache so and our hopes are flung as if the clouds whipped them and the waves washed on them. O John, if you wouldn't mind, say it once again. And he says, "Of his fullness have we all received." Right, John; right. Of his fullness *have* we all received.

There was a man prisoner for a debauched crime; a man who was culturist; a man who was apostle of the sunflower, who talked much about it that was very inane and some about it that was not inane. He was in prison, like to die, and was feeding on black bread, and when they gave him white bread he picked the crumbs like birds do. And in that prison he wrote a story. It was the leaking of his heart. The foul blood leaked down on his hand and on the page. And I read the story. And the thing that impressed me was this: that man, with all his filthiness and crime, and with all his vice, still was nothing other than a culturist. Didn't know God, didn't want God; wanted only the sunflower and the sunlight. Is man that bad? Yes, beloved, yes; that bad. Is man that debased? Oh, yes, beloved! I am not arguing that. Are hopes gone out of some people's life like fire out of the ashes? Oh, yes; oh, yes! Are some people black as mythological midnight? Oh, yes! What is the preacher saying? He is saying that such

a life can get all the fullness of God and be empty no more. Heart, why don't you sing out loud?

Didn't you ever see what God could do? Didn't you go out and see God making the moonlights? Why didn't you? Didn't you go out and see God making the daylights? Why didn't you? "God said"—and his hands were folded. Watch that now. We men and women when we do things put our sleeves up to the shoulders and the strenuous muscles strain almost to snapping and the hands are eager. But I call you to notice that the hands of God are folded, and when he wants to make daylight last for the million centuries all he does is to say, "Let there be light," and there is light. Did you go out and see God when he had the healing of souls in his hands? Did you see Jesus when he went out to cure sick souls? I am not talking about the healing of people's bodies, for that is not much of a chore for God to do. When I hear people talking about whether Jesus could open blind eyes and cure lepers they vex me, for that is so little a thing for God to do. This matter of bodily healing is a thing doctors can do, and God isn't going to take the doctors' work out of their hands. These Dowies have sinned against the sense of the world. God doesn't turn doctor. But God can do it. Oh, yes; it is easy for him. But that is not the thing I think worth talking about. I am talking about the healing of souls. And he found the thief on the cross with his



empty soul, and the man, beggar that he was, couldn't put his hands against his eyes, but only stretched out on the cross with the blood oozing from the palms. All he could do was to look with his aching eyeballs and speak with his aching lips: "Oh, be merciful!" And Christ healed his soul. Think of it. And Mary Magdalene, with your long, black tresses down upon his feet and your kisses on the feet of Him who was walking the way to Calvary, O Mary Magdalene, listen to him. And he says, "Your sins which were plenty are all forgiven." Did you see God do these things? Did you? Well, he knows how. Listen. "Of his fullness"—oh, my empty heart, get him! "Of his fullness"—oh, my empty thought, get him, him! "Of his fullness"—oh, heart, you are bankrupt, you are bankrupt, but you can die a billionaire! Oh, will, you are bankrupt, you are a raveling whipped in the wind, but you can die strong and tall as the cross! Hear this. "Of his fullness"—that is the way to get might.

This is an empty page, did you notice? Not a single character on it. And Edgar Allan Poe comes by and sees the empty page, and it is no trouble for a genius to fill an empty page, is it? No trouble at all. All the trick is to be a genius. And Edgar Allan Poe came by and saw the empty page and wrote "The Bells," and I hear them ringing yet. And he saw the empty page

and wrote on it "Ulalume." And he saw the empty page and scrolled on it a black, unblinking raven that never moved from the door, but stays there yet and haunts the page. And he wrote "Annabel Lee," which is a sob for the woman who comes no more and the arms that are empty forever. He wrote "The City of the Sea." Did you think it strange that the page which was empty and characterless had immortal poems on it? Not at all. The strange thing would have been if the genius had found the empty page and hadn't filled it. No trouble. No trouble for a genius.

This is a box lid, and we are going to use it for kindling, you and I, and the "Farmer Painter" came by and took the box lid and scraped it and borrowed the sunlights of autumn as if he had a golden cluster of grapes—as if the grapes had grown in the vineyards of the sun—golden sunflower clusters—and he squeezed the colors out and put the colors on, and there were ears of corn that you could have shelled. Was that strange? No. Think it not strange, when Montgomery did that. It would have been strange if he could have seen the box and let it go tenantless. That would have been strange.

This other day—Friday, was it?—here along the east shore of the lake, the waves lunging in, every wave shouting with its teeth shut, "Death! Death! Death!" And a ship was caught and was lunged by the billows onto the sand. How

the gales hurled, and how the billows broke, and how the ship sagged, and how the women wept, and how the men prayed, and looked on death, death, death, death. And there was a lifeboat man came part way and caught a rag of rope, clung to it, though it ate his hand clean to the bone, empty of flesh; came up, battered, up to the ship's side—came and stood all day long till every passenger was on the shore. Then, at last, when the captain and his crew—brave men all of them—would not go on the shore, he at last went on shore, where people tried to kiss his feet, but he hasted away. What a day that was! Black universe of glorious cruelty. But that man invaded that day with glory of heroic life. Say, tell me now, is that strange? No. That is not strange! He had it on hand. If you have heroism, you can get rid of it when the time comes. The trick is to have it on hand where it will keep. "Of his fullness"! Is that strange? No; that is just worthy; that is all. "Of his fullness have we all received." That is not strange. The only strange thing about it is that we haven't taken it. That is the strange thing. We don't need to be bankrupt any more, nor shipwrecked; no, nor lambasted by the gale. "Of his fullness." Get that.

We are weak. Let us not forget that! Say, man, you are pretty big, aren't you? You think you could just give death a tussle, don't you? But you don't know. He will spit in your face

and trample you down. He will breathe on you and you will die. He doesn't need to lift his finger to slay you. Death will trample you under his feet. And you thought you were strong; but you are weak. And so many of us fellows—we big men—are weak in spirit. I should like to get an invasion of spunk into some people. Some women know that they are living a poor, scrawny life, given over to social duties, rather than to God, but they haven't spunk enough to be quit of it. What of it? Oh, get the fullness of the Almighty God!

I saw just this other day, a weak woman that hadn't walked for many years—just a poor, weak body. Pain sat by her and played with her, just for fun. Pain is such a malignant fellow. Pain had sat by her and played sword's play with her for years, and when she fell asleep he would jab his sword into her and say, "Wake up, wake up, I am sitting by you." She is so wasted, just a ghost. Can scarcely walk at all—just a trifle. And she has a son; and didn't I tell you how weak his mother was, how wasted with disease, how emaciated, how hacked with the swordplay of pain—but when that boy comes around and takes his mother in his arms, tenderly as if she were a baby, and carries her, I have seen her go upstairs two steps at a jump; no trouble for weakness to get up two steps then. Our God takes us up the steps two at a bound! We need it. Strength is fullness. Not weak any more.

The empty head! Did you ever see a lad way back somewhere—no odds where—there are plenty of wheres for lads to be. He had no books, had to borrow them, didn't know anything. Didn't know Shakespeare had ever been to Avon; didn't know that Chaucer had ever been to France, and came home to sip his wine as poet laureate; didn't know that Longfellow sat in the twilight and made music drop from his heart; didn't know that Burke had ever surpassed himself in the world of eloquence; didn't know that Cæsar had ever tramped the Alps down, and startled nations; didn't know that Napoleon had flayed the world; didn't know anything. A poor, backwoods boy, no matter now, no time to talk about that—that boy got a book and another book and another book and another book. And now that boy over at New York town or Boston town or Chicago town has written books, and the world has wanted to know what he said. Empty? Yes. But he didn't have to stay empty. The fullness, He received the fullness. He didn't need to stay empty. The fullness of God. Give us thy thought, O God! lest our brain be like the barn floor, empty for the thrashing.

Empty of tenderness. Don't need to stay so. No, thank God! Say, friends, what do you think is the worst of worst calamities? Sometimes I think one thing and another and then

another. It is according to how my thinker runs. There are so many things to think; we think this, and another time, if we haven't a petrified thinker, we think another thing. But I am inclined to think the worst of calamities is the calamity of the untender heart—the voice that has no reminder of the heart, the head that has no connection with the heart. What ailed Lachlan Campbell? A hard heart. Poor Lachlan Campbell! And his daughter went away and was lost. Flora Campbell—do you remember—it is in *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush* you shall hear this music of this twilight sparrow. And old Lachlan Campbell—"Lachlan, where's Flora?" "Aya, dinna speak to me. Dinna speak to me." And you dare not speak to Lachlan Campbell about Flora. She is lost and gone away, and gone away and lost! She has gone away, gone away, lost, lost! People don't get lost until they are gone away; and people don't get gone away until they are lost. Lachlan Campbell, your face is hard as chiseled flint; and Margaret Howe came in and said: "Lachlan Campbell, dinna God be merciful to you and pitiful? He be pitiful to you, Lachlan Campbell; ye noo be pitiful to Flora." Flora Campbell coming home the nicht! Flora, will the light be lighted and will the door be opened and will the old man see you? Poor Flora Campbell, whispering through the moonlight, watching with her wounded heart, her shamed heart, and when she came around and

saw the house by the glen there was, aye, a lamp lit in the window, thank God! A lamp lit in the window! And she ran, and ere she came to the door the door opened; and a voice like the voice of tears running to music said, "Flora, Flora!" And she was like a soul that had found shelter, and he held her to his heart. And in the book from which the name of Flora Campbell had been scratched—"Nae daughter o' this house, nae daughter o' mine"—in that book Lachlan Campbell wrote, "Flora, missed." If you have a barren heart you needn't keep it. Why not? Because "of his fullness might we all receive!" And he that died of heartache—think of it. He that died of heartache is able to give us all heartache; and heartache is one of the chiefest mercies that ever invaded a soul.

And He that died of heartache is able to give us tenderness. And He that died of heartache will be able to invade our empty lives with tenderness untold.

Lachlan Campbell, who is that about the house?

And Lachlan Campbell says: "Dinna ye ken? Flora, Flora!"

"Lachlan Campbell, who is getting supper ready?"

"Aw, dinna ye ken, Flora?"

"And, Lachlan Campbell, who will sit at the table head and pour the tay?"

And Lachlan Campbell says, "Flora! Dinna ye ken, my Flora?"

Who's been over to Lachlan Campbell's heart?  
Christ!

Aye, folks, it's tender time. I hear the children singing and I profess to love to hear the song, "It's Half-Past Kissing Time, and Time to Kiss Again!" I don't know who wrote it, but he had the notion right. It's always half-past kissing time, and always time to kiss again! Listen, now; it is Easter! Now it's half-past giving time; time to give again. Half-past tender time; time to be tender again! Half-past loving time; time to love again! Heart! What ails you, anyhow? Sing thy answer, Heart—"Of his fullness have we all received!"



## PRAYER

O CHRIST, blessed be God that our conversation is in heaven. We do not want it to be anywhere else. We belong to thee, and thou belongest to us, and we belong to heaven. Give us a long, sweet springtime and summer in the land of eternal life. For Christ's sake. Amen.

## XIV

### OUR CONVERSATION IS IN HEAVEN

“Our conversation is in heaven.”—*Phil. 3. 20.*

I WISH you would read this with me. I did not say it; I could not. I did not think it up; I could not. And if I had thought it up, I should not have dared to say it. I should have thought it was poetry and that it had better not be talked. Here it is: “Our conversation is in heaven.” I would read on, but I cannot go further. I think we will stop there: “Our conversation is in heaven.” The American Revision says, “Our citizenship is in heaven.” I love the American Revision as a subsidiary voice, but I love that great old music box of the old version, because when we read it out loud it is like hearing John Milton at an organ playing on the organ and singing “Our conversation is in heaven.”

Now, someone is saying, “Let us be careful how he has his exegesis.” Some people never can get further than exegesis. Exegesis is a good place to start, but a poor place to conclude. Let us pay attention to the lift of the voice of God. It would appear that “in heaven” is the end of this strophe. And “in heaven” is where the stars are, and the mornings, and the suns that

we cannot see but know are there. It would seem as if, according to this poet, we were amongst the heavenly bodies, and it would seem as if we were a part of the celestial geography and a part of the divine astronomy.

It is said that we talk about heaven too much. My mind and observation are that we do not talk about it enough. The ground is good—oh, it is good ground! I am like John Burroughs in one matter: whenever I see newly plowed ground I want to eat it—it smells so good, and I think it might taste better; but out of deference to the crops I forbear. It is a blessed ground: It bringeth forth violets and sweet williams by the flowing waters, and it bringeth forth daisies on the hill, and it bringeth forth sunflowers on the prairie. The ground is good, but there is not enough of it for the kingdom of God to house its folks in. This world is not big enough for God to hold a love feast in. He has got to have heaven so as to get the folks in. We have got to have a bigger country and we have got to have a longer life together. This country is going to quit after a while. I do not remember the date, and if I did I would not mention it this morning; but it will not stay long enough.

Was not brainy, beloved Bishop Smith here four years ago? Yes. Where is he now? In heaven. Was not Bishop Walden here four years ago, with his stooped shoulders and his strange, keen eye? Yes. Where is he now? In heaven.

Was not Bishop Warren here, with his stalwart figure that looked as if he could walk across the landscape of eternity and never get tired? Yes. Where is he? He is on the landscape of eternity, taking his walk. Was not Robert McIntyre here four years ago, with his dreamy, far-away look? Yes. Where is he? He is where he looked. Was not Bishop Moore here, with the spirit of a soldier and the heart of an angel? Yes. Where is he? He is over where soldiership and angelhood are one. Was not Naphtali Luccock, the crystal soul and winsome personality, here? Where is he now? He is with the crystal Christ. Ah, that company of bishops, brethren: They were here but a few years ago, and they are not here now. But we have to get acclimated to the country where we are going to be forever. "Our conversation is in heaven."

What is conversation? Well, I am sure it is all we are in the long run. If you listen to a man talk long enough, you will hear all he knows—plus. "Our conversation is in heaven." Ah, brothers, whether it be exegesis or not, let us know this, that whatever we say ends in heaven. Why? This end of the sentence is here, but the other end of the sentence is always in heaven. A woman, a preacher's wife—and her husband is here this morning—said to me, with a strange quaver in her voice, like music beginning, "You know, Brother Quayle, our daughter, our only daughter, is in the glory land." Ah, me: She

began talking of a daughter here, and she ended talking of a daughter there. The other end of our conversation is always in heaven, thank God. We are all orators when we get religion, because the other end of our talk is heavenly eloquence.

Someone says, "This word means 'occupation.' " Yes, it does, thank God! It means "occupation"—our occupation is in heaven. You say: "No, it is in Dover. It is in New York. It is in Kansas City." Where are Dover, New York, and Kansas City? They are down at the foot of the hill called Zion, right down at the foot of the hill; and if you look up, when the smoke shifts, you will see the glittering of the holy towers, and hear the voice of God as he looks over and says, down to the world: "Good morning, occupation. Good morning." Down at the foot of the hill the job goes on, but at the top of the hill the job concludes.

Money—I heard that word once; although I am not strictly familiar with it, I have heard the word—what is money? Something to be earned on the ground and invested in eternity. That is money. And as we work at our work what are we doing? Said a woman, "I am just an ordinary woman, and I am taking care of the baby." Thank God! God is mothering the baby too; and you and God together will rear the baby.

A woman who is rearing a baby—what is she doing? Rearing somebody for eternity. Our occupations are all not only under the eye of God,

but they are in the territory of eternity. Our occupation is in heaven, thank God! Man, you who sweep the street, sweep it well; and maybe God will give you a job sweeping the golden pavement after a while—if you do your work well here. He will need somebody to do that sort of work. When some of the saints come in and walk over the pavement he will need someone to sweep the dust away. Man, you who are a statesman, get eager for God, and maybe he will call you into his Cabinet in heaven. Our occupation is in heaven. Thank God!

But our friendship, where is it? It is in heaven too. You know, I am one of the vagabonds of God, by the grace of my brethren. They said to me: "Brother Quayle, you may go as an itinerant; and out in places where people are not careful what they hear, you may speak." So there I am and do you know, people sometimes say to me, "Why, Brother Quayle, do you not get tired of going around and seeing people?" No, praise God! Why? Because I am making friendships for eternity. I am just picking up some new friends, so that if I get to heaven, with God lifting a lot and myself lifting a little, when I come to the door of eternity maybe a great company will say, "Brother Quayle, welcome." Our friendships are in eternity. Here we are, all together, and the next time we meet we will be in heaven. Thank God! We must not miss it. In heaven is our appropriate country. Robert

Browning talks about "our appropriate" country. Our appropriate country is in heaven, and we are now in it, but in which end? The north end. Oh, listen, brothers!

The north end of heaven is where the eternal cold stays, where the spring winds have no warmth, where the winters are all the year round wild and tumultuous. What is the south end? Where everlasting spring abides. In the south end of heaven we are going to be put. We are in the north end of heaven now, but flowers are blooming even here on the snowdrifts, thank God.

There was a man I knew who had a daughter, and that daughter had never been away from home at all to speak of. There came a time when she was going to be married. Her father's custom had always been to tuck that girl in bed at night. No matter how late he came in—and he was out late at nights on the Lord's errands—her door was left ajar and he was ordered by his child to come and tuck her in bed; and so always, whatever time of the night he came in, he would go in softly and tuck her in and kiss her. And sometimes she would partly awaken, and say, "Hello, daddy"; and he would say, "Good night, sweetheart." And so it came to the last night that she should be under his roof. He went in, and his heart was full of aching and full of tears; but he neither showed heartache nor tears. He smiled at her, and she said to him, "You are going to tuck me in?" and he said, "Yes, I will tuck

you in." So he went in that last night she was to be under his roof and under the shadow of his love, and he tucked her in; and she put her arms around his neck and drew him close, and he put his arms around her and said, "My daughter"; and she just said, "Daddy"; and he tucked her in. I wonder if God, in the last night that we are to be in our home on the ground, will not come down and tuck us in. When our eyelids droop, and our voices falter, and we can hear no sound, Someone will be there; and it will be God, and he will tuck us in: and he will say, "Sleep sweetly"; and then he will stay right there, and will not go away, and by and by he will awaken us with a kiss, and say, "It is morning."



## PRAYER

WE give God thanks that in his Book, earth's grimmest enemy is taken by the throat. Sin is dealt harshly with. No diffident intimation of its name, no shrugging-shouldered passing of it by as if it were a passing mischance, but an honest look of loathing as sin simpers by or struts or makes its shameful and shameless boastings. God calls sin, sin. He does not name it mistake, or mischance. He calls it wickedness. He will not have it near his house nor near himself. Its breath is baleful. Its flesh is putrid. It shames the air. It stenchs wherever it comes. God is against it.

Aaron for himself made offering before he could offer for the people. Sin is at everybody's door. It must be slain. The scapegoat on whose head sins were poured was led out into some lonely wilderness of desolation, and then he who led it must cleanse himself. The scapegoat gave off contagion, so foul sin is.

Lord, by these object lessons teach the dullest of us what sin is, and how terrible it is, and what God thinks of it, and how God abhors it, and what it took God to get rid of it, even the life and death of his Son. God's scapegoat was our Christ. He went out into Death's grim wilderness with the world's sin upon his head. Small wonder that he died.

Lord, for the Lamb of God that it taketh away the sin of the world we give thee daily thanks, hourly thanks. Sin is ruinous, but need not ruin us. We have a Deliverer. "He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." We may be counted part of that—"his people." Make us hate sin, shun sin, seek cleansing for sin by the only remedy this world has ever known. By the blood of Jesus make us every whit clean. O Lord, we need the Christ. Amen.

## XV

### THE FRIEND OF THE BRUISED REED

“A bruised reed shall he not break.”—*Isa. 42. 3.*

THERE are times when a preacher covets to the point of heartbreak the gift of reading. I have heard tell of a man who read the Lord's Prayer with such tenderness of feeling that when people heard it they wept. And I really think that so copious an utterance—at once so full of earth and heaven, at once so full of rest and strenuous endeavor—as the Lord's Prayer should be able to be recited so as to break up the great deeps of the human heart. But we do not in the main know how. If only there were a reader here—not a reciter, not that, not an elocutionist, not that, but a reader—I think he would read the text I have announced so as to make your hearts ache. Would to God that I could read it, but I cannot. “A bruised reed shall he not break.”

This prophet has his eyes on the face of some infinite tenderness. He is looking up and away and out and far off, and he sees not simply a strong, triumphant face like Cæsar's or Napoleon's, not simply a face vast in resolution and untroubled by despair, but he sees that face

fallen to tenderness. It is as if Napoleon smiled upon his baby, the king of Rome; it is as if Cæsar had forgotten he were the lord of an empire and remembered only that he had compassion for somebody's pain. But will you remark that when this prophet saw this face, looking, looking, looking—saw the face—he had to see it; he never could have told of it if he hadn't seen it. Nobody can affirm what he hasn't experienced. He saw a face, and he saw that this is so tender that a bruised reed it would not break. And this prophet dwelt in an era of acerbity; he dwelt in an era of cruelty, when it was a part of the amenity of war to take prisoners and thrust spears into both their eyeballs and turn them, blind and silenced, out to die. He dwelt in the bitter era when they cut off men's right hands at the wrist so they could never be bowmen again, bend the bow, send the arrow to the heart, And he had a vision of strength that was grown tender, and he had a vision of a brain that had a heart, and he had a vision of might that had learned gentleness. O beloved, I would to God we might learn what a vision that was, and how needed. It was the business of might to bruise the reed, take it, crush it, let it lie bleeding. Who cares if it die? That was power. Power is mutilative. Power crushes. Power is like the elephant's tread.

This is the picture: The Jordan's tortuous stream, zigzagging in and out, with its turbid,

turbulent flow; and the beasts of prey come down to the waters to lap their drink. And they crush down at nighttime, when the stars come out, and set their feet on whatsoever impedes their progress, and the reeds are there, answering to the wind, and the reeds are there, pitifully weak, and the reeds are there, foredoomed to be crushed by the cruel oncoming of the thoughtless feet; and the beast crushes down what he will and goes and takes his drink, and goes back to the desert hills to cry aloud for food at his midnight. But the reed, weak at its strongest, bruised, totters on that weakness of stem, with the wound of which it could easily die; and if the wind comes fitful and free, or if the wind snarls a little down the Jordan valley, or snarls a little across the stream, then the bruised reed will break. "A bruised reed will be not broken." A compassion is somewhere which takes cognizance of weakness. Strength is somewhere which does not mutilate or frighten; a hand is somewhere which does not crush into a fist and strike like the hammer of Thor strikes, but reaches out like a man's caress of a sleeping babe. Oh, would to God that we might look upon the face!

And I am of the opinion, beloved, that maybe, after all is said, we people have not given correct estimate to negations in character; we have not considered how much is added to character by subtraction; we have not estimated, perchance, what I will call the addition by subtraction.

Life is made or slain oftentimes by the things we are not as certainly as by the things that we are. Here is gentleness. What might gentleness be defined to be? Well, gentleness is might grown tender. It is like a sick woman lying all the year through watching as eventide comes for the face of her husband, quieting her heart through the days by his homecoming at night; watching not the dial of the clock and the hour and minute hand while they flick, but watching the nearness to his coming and his kiss upon the lips. And then there is his step in the hall, and the hurrying feet to the room, and the woman with the smiling face turned her husband's way, and the faint voice saying, "You have come," and the strong voice saying, "I am here."

And if you chance to have a heart, which, please God, may you have plenty of, if you would care to wait and see that strong man's strong hands hold his wife's hands—almost transparent they are against the light, and his hands are so big and so rugged, so fearful, so strong; so meant to cope with dangers; so qualified to tussle with strength; so masterful, so imperious, so brutal, if he will; those strong hands of a strong strength's might—if you want to see a poem that needs no music set to it, stay beside and watch how the woman reaches out her two weak, wan hands and how the strong man's strong hands hold them. And the woman looks at him and smiles, and the two huge, strengthful hands hold the two

small, strengthless hands. And her hands have gotten home. What is the matter with the mighty hands' might? Oh, it has grown to gentleness. It would be no trick for the strong hands to crush the little hands till the bones fairly cracked. That would be the thing we might expect with strength. But when the hands grow gentle, and the might dies out, and the strength is only a prophecy and not a potency, oh, then are the strong hands celestial! "A bruised reed shall He not break." The hands that squeezed the plastic stars into their present shape, the hands that took the masses of star dust He has sown in space and glued them into solid suns and blazing stars and massive world's which swing through the universe, those hands are so gentle that when He puts thumb and finger on a bruised reed He doth heal it and not hurt it. And if you think that this lesson is of long since, and if you think that this story hath gone past us like the streets that swing past us when the locomotive runs fretful-footed as the storm, you dream a foolish dream. There is so much might and such vast strength. Strength is like to grow pitiless, and strength is inapt to be pitiful. And there is Somebody who would take a bruised reed and not hurt it. Had you ever hurt a hand? Had you ever a great gash on the hand's back, and somebody came along and said, "How are you to-day?" and reached for your hand, and you said, "No, no." Some people when

they come along, you hide your hand behind your back. You are skittish.

They are in the hay press business; they reduce your hand to pulp. And to other people when they come along you don't have to say your hand is hurt, and you have a wound; for they will see it, and the voice will say what the eyes behold, and you reach out the hand, and the voice says, "It is a bad wound," and the strong fingers caress the wound, and somehow or other there seems to be healing in the touch. Who is that? That is Christ. If I had a hurt hand, I would stretch it to Christ if he were here. I would not withhold it. I would proffer it. If I had a hurt heart, I would hold it out to Christ. If I had bruised lips, I would lean them for his kiss. If I had the broken purpose, I would say, "O gentleness grown great, O strength grown tender, touch my weakness that it learn thy strength." This matter of adding to us by subtracting from us; this matter of teaching audacity how to withhold; this matter of teaching volubility silence; this matter of laying the finger on the blabbing lips; this matter of taking all our outrageous faculties that naturally rise in insurrections like a revolution of people tired of despair, taking them and teaching them not only placidity but help, is negative. Whenever strength grows gentle, then strength is glorious. Whenever might grows tender, then is might become worthy of God.

No man ever looked at Wendell Phillips' face and could know him until he had seen Wendell Phillips in his wife's sick-room. She was a perpetual invalid. And he that met the snarling crowds, and he that buffeted them and baffled them, and he that stood like a rock amidst the storm for angers to yeast around, and his voice ran out like the spear's thrust—you didn't know Wendell Phillips, the man that stood tall and pale and fearless and even cruel, until you saw him at his house. How his voice grew sweet and low like a lover's lute when his love is close beside him, when his voice grew tender and quiet like a man's strong bass voice singing a lullaby to his baby at evening. And the man who could outbrawl tempests and could be heard through the cannon's voice, did you ever hear him singing his baby to sleep? I knew a man once whose voice was so magnificent that he could outcall battle trumpets, and I used to hear him sometimes singing his grandbaby to sleep, and his voice was sweet like the caress of the south wind to the lilies at starlight when the stars have just arisen, so soft and low, crooning, crooning, crooning. If Christ were here, if that voice of his that waked the dead and hereafter will awaken all the sleeping dust and bid it answer for all its deeds done in the body, if that voice were here and your baby were sick and sleeping, that voice would not waken it. "A bruised reed shall he not break." That voice that makes death scared



and makes hell to be ashamed, would quiet your baby that was crying in its dreams until it smiled and slept with never a cry. "A bruised reed shall he not break."

Do you know what makes Charles Kingsley a man to be relied on while the ages go? And do you understand how people might read his poetry or might not, and might read his novels or not? (Though reading them I think always to be helpful to the soul; but you might pass that by and forget it.) But you won't forget that when he was gone fast asleep beyond the waking, then his wife said that he was the gentlest gentleman, she thought, that ever lived—the gentlest gentleman, she thought, that ever lived. We shall not forget that, shall we? No. Do you know what it is that renders Julius Cæsar the most-cared-for character that has come to us from the old brutal Roman days, and do you know why Cato is less the man in public feeling than Cæsar of the cruel look, of the hand that knew no brooking and feared no antagonism and broke down all opposition? Do you know why Julius Cæsar, dead thousands of years, still holds in his hand the admiration of the world? It is this—that Cæsar, more than any Roman we know, knew how to love. And the brute of the Roman might grew gentle in him sometimes, and the brute in him ceased to crush

down the reeds, and the heart of him learned sometimes to forgive.

Beloved, this hour look upon the face of Him who though he had might was never riotous with it; though He had force was never hard with it, whose hands were swift in binding up the broken reeds. O prophet, and you saw the face! O, heart of mine, you also will see the face.

Those bruised folks—there are plenty of us—we bruised folk, we are a great company. We bruised folk, none but God can count us. When people have the hurt body, we can see it; when people have the hurt heart we cannot see it. People hide hurt hearts. If you went into a house and saw the woman suddenly wiping the tears away, what does it mean? Oh, she will hide her wound. If you went into a business office and found the man red-eyed and the hands suddenly tucked into a pigeonhole in the office drawer, what does it mean? It means he has been having his heartache out with himself. The presumption is that that man will tell you that he has got a touch of grippe—his eyes are swollen. What ails him? The bruised heart. Have the bruised folk got a friend? Oh, truly. Has the bruised will got a friend? Oh, truly. Has the bruised character got a friend? Truly. This is the Friend of bruised folk. The folks the other people turn their backs on, Christ turns his face to, and he says, “Didn’t you know I would come?”

In Isabelle Morse's *Talks in a Library*, in which she rehearses the experiences she had heard Laurence Hutton have amongst his books, there is recited this: he had often been asked to write a novel and had never written one; but he said he had seen this incident, out of which he thought, had he been a novelist born or of divine intent, he might have written a strange, sweet, pregnant story. One November day at evening at Florence, in Italy, as he came hurrying past the baggage car, or what stands for that with us, he saw helpers taking out very tenderly a package that usually didn't go in baggage cars, and he stood close, and it was a little boy so wan and pale, so thin and ghastly as to be very pitiful. And the little wan face turned and looked around wistfully as thinking somebody would be there, and nobody was there to meet him. And they set the little wan face and thin figure up against the stony side of the station and gave him two little crutches, and he leaned his arms upon them both; and there was one leg that was gone and one shoe that was missing, and below the knee was naught but emptiness. He had been at a hospital, and he was freshly out and was coming home; and whether anyone came for him Laurence Hutton never knew; but the boy leaned against the wall of the station on his little crutches and looked so wistful, and nobody came. And they left him there alone, and nobody happened around for him. And if He

## THE FRIEND OF THE BRUISED REED 233

that will not break a bruised reed had been there, He would have stayed with the laddie. There are plenty of folk like that, beloved, not those wounded at the joints, not those with the empty shoe nor with the mutilated arm—they are scant and few and could be numbered—but the people with the mutilated heart, and the people with the broken purpose, and the people with the shamed history, and the people on whom their fathers have turned their backs, and the people who are not what they ought to have been, and the people whose yesterday is damaged and whose to-morrow is clouded with smoke; all of those folks have a friend; and his name is Christ. “A bruised reed he shall not break.” Sometimes I hear business men say, “Yes, let a fellow fail and business is through with him.” I don’t know about that. I cannot tell as to that, though I think that statements concerning business harshness are likely to be voluble slanders, but I don’t know about that; but I know that the bruised reed of human life has one Friend, one Friend. And I say this morning that if ever a word were uttered in the ears of human life that needed to be recollected, it is this: that the bruised people have a Friend.

The man with the bruised life, the woman with a bruised life, the people that are ill-homed, ill-born, ill-cradled, cursed with drink, in whose ears are sounded not prayers—which are the sweetest music which ever, I think, tuned

viols of music in human hearts—but in whose ears instead are curses and brawls and angers manifold between mother and father; people that were turned on the street for comfort, people that came to a sullen and dirty house and never dreamed it was a home, people that were swept out into the world's street damaged, slum products; your people reared in rich men's houses who have never heard of God nor the sweet solace of the Christ—wherever God is not taught is slums; wherever there is no gentle affirmation of the Christ it were better to be born in the lonely, frozen regions of the upper Sierras, like the mountain sheep's babies, than to be reared in godless habitations, where there is no skyline and no morality. And what about these bruised folks? Answer, "A bruised reed will he not break."

I hear a great deal of talk, and I think it witless talk mainly, namely, not talk that is measured by what God has said, talk about what will God do with folks that haven't had a chance. But if you listen a minute you would know, wouldn't you, "a bruised reed will he not break." The damaged character he will rightly estimate. And as to the polluted stream of life, he will take into account the sources of its pollution. God is not exacting but just. Now, what else can you want? It is tenderness—"the bruised reed will he not break."

Who is this Man who is gentle with the bruised reed? Who is this Man who is genteel with despair? Who is this? Answer, he is the Judge of all the earth. He is the Judge with whom, hereafter and forever, we shall have to do, and the answer concerning him is, It is Jesus; and his tenderness and justice are compacted together like the fingers and the palm of the hand, and the bruised reed he will be equitable toward. That is enough. That is enough. I have known people who were so ashamed they were shameless; I have known people so dragged in the dirt—had dragged themselves—that they cared only for the ground; and when everybody was ashamed of them He of the broken reed and of the bruised reed would go and pick them up and would say, “Wouldn’t you take another chance?” This is He who came to the ruined reputation and damaged character and the shameless, brazen face and said to her, “Wouldn’t you like to try again?”

“Ah! ah!” she sobbed.

Her name was Mary, and her other name was Magdalene. All of her name together, though, she never told him for sobbing.

He said, “Your name, what is your name?”

She said, “Mary.”

“What else?”

“Magdalene—Mary Magdalene.”

“Oh,” he said, “Mary Magdalene, what about another chance?”

“A bruised reed he will not break.” Oh, you

folks, I wonder on my heart whether you folk and whether I have learned about this God of the bruised people. I wonder whether we have ever learned that the ruined folks have found the sweetest Friend that ever human life knew. There are plenty of people with bruised will, that never had a will of any particular strength, or have misused the one they had; or, if they had a will of singular might, they have abused it, they have sapped its strength, they have pummeled it to death, scarred it to death; they have become more wobbly than the salt sheet flung by the wind. What of them? Answer: He of the bruised reed is not here to bruise, but mend; and up and down all the Jordan valleys of the world, there is always moving the gentle Christ—always, always. Wherever tramps the crunching world, wherever stamp the cruel, heartless energies of the ground, wherever drunkenness goes lewdly down along the Jordan and tramps the pitiful folk, wherever sin does its wicked worst, there, tramping and leaning over and watching where the reeds are overborne, is He that will not break a bruised reed. And He is holding them in his hand till they are well again.

I honestly think, beloved, if this preacher knew the art to tell the story of the bruised reed, it might make your hearts tender. Would God he knew it, as he knows it not, but there is, anyhow, some Friend, for the bruised people, some Friend for the bruised reputation. What about

the people that used to be known and cared for, and now by accident or weakness, or both, or worse even than either, have shamed their yesterday, so that now they go out and look at the world passing by, and then get far away? No, no, no. Ah, but the Friend of the bruised reed will help them and not hurt them. Though society will spurn them the Christ of society will spurn them not. Oh, people, people, you folks who have the bruise in the heart, you folks that have the bruise on the conscience, you folks that have the bruise in the character, you folks that have been wounded somehow or other and the wounds never healed, and nobody knows, only the Friend of the bruised reed—he won't be violent with you. The gentle Christ won't.

Once I had a doctor, and I had a hurt, and he came and took hold of me and he jabbed at me, and I said: "My sakes, doctor, hold on a minute. I'm alive yet; ease up on that. I can talk back yet. When I want a fellow to pull me to pieces, I will speak to him about it."

"Oh," he said, "it won't hurt much."

And he took hold of me, and he jabbed me, and he pulled me, till I felt I was dead, or I would die in a hurry. I wouldn't want that to last all summer. And then one time I had a doctor, and he took hold of me, and he did what he did so gently I thought he was funning with me. And when he came again, I said, "Go



ahead, that was fun yesterday.” Some perform surgeries with a kiss, and some wash away your hurt with a tear. Oh, who is it? It is He of the bruised reed, and his name is Christ. Would God all of us knew him!



## PRAYER

BLESSED be God Triune, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, our Comforter has come. And there is not space to utter earth's gladness for that coming, that heavenly coming. All of us who have been shamed by sin, all of us who have been hurt in battle, or on the traveled ways know the need of the Comforter.

We bless God we have needed the Comforter and have had him and have him now. O psalm inaudible, O perfume sweet as lilies of resurrection, O voice of quiet, O touch of calm, O music ineffable—the Comforter is come!

Would that all the world would welcome his arrival and be covered by the quiet of his evening sky so that to all there might come his sweet good night. Amen.

## XVI

### THE COMFORTER

"But when the Comforter is come."—*John 15. 26.*

As you noticed, I have clearly read you a fragment of a text, and I quit not in the middle but at the commencement of it. And yet, if you will pause, you will notice that in concluding this text at its beginning there is subtle poetry not to be scoffed at. For what is so appropriate as to stop "when the Comforter is come"? What will follow, what mercy will stream up like the daydawn, what springtime will flower out like the fields of June, nobody knows, "When the Comforter is come." Amen.

The fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth chapters of John command the most unutterable atmosphere that ever spilled down on the pages of a book. I will set these over against any pages in literature for the comfort and the calm of an amazing peace. In Tennyson's "Passing of Arthur," when Arthur lies in the barge, and the queens, stoled in black, make their wail for the slaughter of this magnanimity called King Arthur, King Arthur, with the life blood dripping from his wound, talks about the Island Valley of Avilion where falls not rain

or snow—the far off, the undiscerned, the hoped-for, the dreamed of, the Valley of Avilion. But that calm of that island valley is not so sweet nor deep as the calm of this island valley of the Book of John.

I think that Bryant's "Green River" commands an atmosphere of summer peace not often attained by any poet, and yet the quiet swimming of that quiet water toward the quiet summer sea is not so still or sweet as these chapters of John. There is no place my feet have wandered amongst books or sweet-hearted poets, all of which seems so inexpressibly calm and calming, as these chapters. Longfellow has atmospheres of great quiet. Edmund Spenser has a house of sleep where across your charmed faculties came calm and rest. And Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" seems to drive the world outward and upward until you are thrilled with the shadows' lengthening of the tombstones upon the graves. But not all of them, in my humble judgment, are qualified to construct this atmosphere of calm such as is in the book of John.

I was the other day down at a canyon in Illinois; and may chance you didn't know that Illinois had a canyon: but it has. And my opinion is that among New England hills and mountains I do not know so calm, quiet, and gracious a cut in the hills of God as this canyon of Illinois. And the day was bright, and my friend and I drew near, and a gateway into a valley opened.

A lad with a stout arm could have flung a rock from cliff to cliff. Crude, naked sand cliffs, about a hundred feet, say, in altitude. Not a touch of flower on all their smooth, unspotted ramparts. On the top of these sand cliffs grew deciduous trees with never a leaf on them as yet, standing waiting with wonder for the spring's caress and the kiss of the skies. On the summit of these rocks on either side was a landscape of winter. The chilly winds blew languidly, it is true, and yet the chilly winds were blowing. But in this canyon, carpeted with greenery, spangled with flowers, where a stream ran down in great laughter and much song, where the sunshine seemed to be put together for a frame where the landscape housed—oh, it was such a day as if all the balm that hath light-breathed laughter, breathed across a man's spirit. And we plucked flowers there, my friend and I; built our bonfire there, my friend and I; watched the slow, blue smoke lift and flame away to either side of the gray-brown canyon. And the winds of the upper sky blew shrewdly with a touch of winter on their breath, but in our canyon there were no winds a blowing: only the blue smoke lifted and sprayed out fanwise; and the sunshine melted on us like dew, and the laughter of God seemed to look in our faces and our hearts. Ah, well, brothers, sisters, that calm of sunlight, that shut-in canyon has not a rest as has this section of this book of John I speak to you about

this moment, great rest, much sunshine, sweet peace.

Now, I think the dialogue of Plato called *Crito* is the solitary place I know of in literature the incidents and accidents of which are to be put alongside this episode, from whose sweet flowering I wish to pluck this morning's sprig of beauty. As you know, the *Crito* of Plato is the highest surge of the widest wave that ever broke upon heathen shores. There is nothing whatever in all the moods of the ancient thinking world that climbs quite so high as the philosophy of Socrates about to die, as he talks with his friends, Crito, Xenophon, Plato, and the rest, as the cup of hemlock is on the table by him, and that wandering hand of his reaches toward it, and he caresses the cup, and with laughter that illumines his face rains a little of his wonder on them like the spring-time uses its winds: and he talked with his friends about the future life. And then, did you not read—and if you have not read, then read it—it is always good to get a full-face view of people who are about to die and don't dodge, about to go beyond and don't look back afraid. But the thing I would have you know, not by way of reprehension, but by way of observation, is that in the *Crito* Socrates is yet not man but philosopher. Socrates was never man, but always philosopher. And when his wife came beating at the door to kiss him good-by, and weep a little at his cheek, his voice said: "Send her away.

Women make much noise at such a time as this. Send her away."

Now, I do not say that Xantippe was much the wife or one to be lauded, but I do say she was as much a wife as Socrates was a husband, and to add that this dull brutality is quite significant in Socrates. And my conviction is what I remarked upon—he was a philosopher and not the man. And then note the calm, cold way he talks in his philosophizings on the other life; and having read it often, having taught it to many classes in the Greek room in college, having loved it much, I still profess I come away from it feeling as though I had been on the upper Alps where the wild winds blew cold and shivery, and I wrapped my garments close and said, "It is winter here." And if we are to compare that with this passage from the lips of Jesus Christ, we see how these chapters of John are of the same import—a man about to die. When Socrates was to take the cup of hemlock and he sat there and reached out his hand and drunk it down and lay amongst his friends and straightened his knees and laid his arms and hands quiet, not a sound in the room, only a husky touch of sob from strong men's throats. And if you remember that Jesus was about to die amongst the sneerings, the noise of hammerings, of the unspeakable hatreds of the throng, the callings, "Crucify him!" the driving of nails into his palms, the dull and heavy thud of hammers that crushed



through bone and flesh, the brawling people, the leaning of the crown of thorns, the awful agony of a man who saw a multitude for whom he died that scoffed at him, spurned him, and then in spite of that—you mark that this island Valley of Avilion is close against it, and this unutterable atmosphere of unutterable calm is Christ, neighborhood to Christ's cross.

Then the miracle of this place is not that in literature it stands solitary, though it doth, and is therefore like the other doings and sayings of the Christ. But the miracle of this incident was a miracle of life. This great, brave Christ did so. The hand that soon was to feel the piercing of the nails is tenderly laid on pulse or shoulder, and the voice that was soon to say, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" is saying such things that for sweetness and light, for moonlight and sunlight mixed, are like wine of holy hope. This place hath not a parallel in the life of man. And the thing I care to have you know is that the reason why it has such strange and unapproachable calm is that the Comforter is come. "The Comforter is come." God, the Holy Spirit, hath arrived. There is plenty of perturbation, but not with Christ; he speaks for the Holy Ghost. There is much surliness, but not with Christ; he speaks with the voice of gladness and of hope; and if you will read these chapters, which I pray you do, by way of sowing your heart to flowers once more, you will see that in these chapters he

talks about the heaven toward which we haste, the Father's rest, the Father's kiss, the Father's peace, the Father's open door, the Father's open heart, the Father's widespread arms, the Father's waiting, and the Father's welcome. He is telling us of heaven. And if you will read these chapters you will find that he is telling us that the new law, the new Decalogue for human life is "Love one another." And you will find that the new dignity of human life is enforced and named when he says, "I call you not servants, but friends." And you will find that the new service of mankind that has come is named when he says, "Ye are to be witnesses that have been with me from the beginning." And you will find that Jesus gives heritage of peace—"My peace I give unto you." And you will find that he opens jars of wine of heaven and spills gracious liquor on the thirsty lips, and says, "That your joy may be full." And would you think, beloved, when you read these chapters, that just beyond the door of this house there waited the gnarled tree and there waited the wicked spear, and there waited the scourge upon the back, and there waited the anguish and the heartache? What makes all this Supper room so full of comfort and of such unspeakable peace? And the answer still is with unperturbed fidelity of phrase, "The Comforter is come."

When the Comforter is come can it be that every distress is broken by a power that calms

the things which used to trouble us? Aye, so it looks. Can it be that beyond us and above us there is a power only waiting to apply its healing kiss on the heart, and in that kiss there is rest? So it seems. And it seems as if the power were Jesus. He has been telling us about the vine and branches. He has been saying he is the vine and we the branches. He has been saying we are but the outgrowth of him. He has been saying the reason we bear rich fruitage is because we are in him. He is saying that because he is with us and we are with him, therefore the sort of life he hath we have, and what sort of fruit he bears we bear. And there is such a calm on him. I defy you to look at the Jesus face, and I defy you to look at the Jesus words, and not feel the infiltration of the calm of summer evening, and the evening stars lit, and the shadows creeping clean across the world and the far uplands of the sky and the great dome of the dark; and there is not even a trivial wind a-blowing, and the day is all quiet, and the flowers fall fast asleep as the babies are; and the lambs are in the fold; and across the quiet world there cometh only the balm of quiet sleep. Rest like that. And it is because the Comforter is come. It is not because there is no distress; and it is not because there is no shame with it; and it is not because there is not cruel battle a-hammering with its mailed hand, and knocking at its door; and it is not because life is not hard, but

because into human life there comes the out-pouring of heaven and the Comforter and great calm.

And I think, beloved, that seeing life is so burly and tramps so hard upon our feet, and calls so raspingly in our ears and feels so fitfully of our pulse, and counts our pulse beats and rings them out in exasperating tones, and calls, "One beat, two beats, three beats, four beats, five beats, six beats, seven beats, eight beats, nine beats, ten beats, eleven beats, twelve beats"—going along the world calling, calling out a man's pulse beats—therefore we need the Comforter. And tramping along is "One sent out from God," the messenger of Jesus Christ, saying grace from the Father and the Son: "Peace I give unto you."

There is a story of the halcyon. You know it well; that at the center of the tempest there is calm. And whatever the truth may be concerning the gyrations of the tempest upon the stormy land or sea, I will answer for it for God and with memory of my own heart's experience that at the core of the tempests of the world there is a spot of calm, and it is where and because the Comforter has come. I speak this morning not of any dream of theology and happy dream of wonder and comfort; I speak this morning not concerning the expectation of the soul, but the acquisition of the soul, Christ's calm, because he hath given us the Holy Spirit.

Would you listen to a preacher's suggestion, beloved, when he says some things cannot be taught out? that our arithmetic is inapt to make some computations? that our logic is too juvenile at its oldest to open the doors of the logic of life? Some things have got to be gotten at by the heart. You cannot have logic and reason solely sufficient leaders for the soul. I will prove it to you. Have I underestimated logic? Do I put reason into the background? I shall not. God has put reason where reason knows how to do its lordly task? You can figure out gravitation. Newton did. You can figure out the weight of this world by mathematics. The astronomers have. You can reason out evolution by geology and morphology and paleontology.

You can do it with those. Those things are for the adding together of twos and twos and twos. Those things are arrangements of the order of syllogism and the premises and the conclusions. Those things are able to do that and are done. You can by force of sheer reason construct a constitution of the United States. Brawny men who had history at their finger tips and who had in their circulation of blood the love of liberty, went by a land of yesterday and turned their faces westward and breathed in long breaths of liberty on plain and mountain climbing to the sky, drank in long, deep breaths, and out of all that they framed the superbest political document that ever set its wonder on

the pages of a nation's history. You can do that with a brain. All these brain dynamical occasions are marvelous.

But there are some things we cannot get at with the brain. You cannot get at sorrow. You cannot get at heartbreak. You cannot get at love. If you try to think those things out, you will be barren as spring when the mountain streams are frozen dry as dust and the mountain flowers fail on the mountain, and the cold mountain peak keeps its eternal vigil of winter. You cannot reason out the love for a little child. You cannot reason out a husband's love for his wife. You cannot reason out a woman's love for her husband. You cannot reason out a father's affection for his daughter or his son. You cannot reason out why a woman for her baby's sake, who lies snug on her heart, would gladly die and leave to-morrow for the babe. What people who think they are philosophers may or may not know is we have got to get at some things solely by the usage of the heart. You cannot reason out the heartbreak of Jesus on the cross. You cannot reason out the heartache of David over Absalom, his errant son. You cannot reason out why people when they die and their beloveds have gone before them, run toward their death like lovers toward their love. The thing we are to hold fast to is that the master moods of the soul are only to be gotten at by the way of the heart. My judgment holds you cannot reason

the Trinity out or through. The doctrine of Trinity in the present intellectual obtuseness of mankind is beyond reason but because it is beyond reason doesn't affect it, and because we have been unable to hold it in our feeble fingers doesn't say it cannot be held. The doctrine of Trinity is, as you know and I know, swung to us from the far-off skies, and God has told it to us, and we could never have found it out and cannot now reason it out. But that is not saying it is not true. That is not saying it cannot be held. That is not saying it cannot be appropriated. A man can appropriate the sky so he can breathe it, but he cannot master the sky nor understand it by art of chemistry. A man can appropriate the ocean when he swims into its tossing billows, and it seems as if he were not the plaything of the ocean, but that the ocean was a hired man of his. And the doctrine Christ has declared to us is so sublime, so solitary, so intricate, so becoming, so comfortable to the man's heart that loves God as that if you get it out of the heart, then you understand it. Nobody that never had a mother could know what it was to have one. You could not explain a mother to some motherless boy.

"Had you ever a mother?" said you.

"What is that?" he said.

"Had you never a mother?"

"What is a mother?" said the man.

"Never a mother?"

"I heard that word never before," he said.

Now, look—what could you do to him to make him understand a mother? You could not explain it to him. You cannot make charts and show him. You cannot reason out to him the philosophy of motherhood. You cannot reason out those things. But what you could do would be to say, "Come over and see my mother." And he would come toward the door, and outside the door and at the gate, if you had one, and out on the walk beyond the gate was your mother, and her arms went around your neck and she said, "Dear son." And she kissed you thrice and was not tired. And you said, "Mother, this is my friend. He never had a mother." And your mother looked at him with such a world of sorrow and wonder in her look. "Never had a mother?" she said. "Poor boy, no mother." And then do you understand that the motherless laddie's heart would begin to ache, and the man's eyes would become a lake of tears, and the man's voice would choke. And he would say: "This is a mother. O, is this a mother? Is this a mother?" To see a mother is beautiful; to have a mother—that is better. To have her kiss on your cheek and chin and lips. To have her sit beside you when you are sick abed. To have her call to you when she is dying. To have her when she is near the dim river say, "Is Johnnie in at night?" And she has forgotten all the dim years since this big man was but a lad, and she



is groping where the shadows thicken and the night is dark, and the last thing she thinks of, ere she slips out into the dark through whose shadows the calling voice of the King shall beckon her to peace, is, "Is laddie in at night?" The last thing, what is that? That is feeling your way to truth. That is hearting your way to truth. Not thinking it. You cannot get that. No syllogism includes it. No logical process interprets it. But you can heart your way to motherhood. And because you must make your way with your heart to your mother is no reason why you have not made lordly march to your mother.

Now, here is this superlative doctrine of the Trinity. My conviction is it is the most amazing conception that has ever appealed to human understanding. You cannot reason it out. I have read those theological books which have attempted, by one method or another, whether by logic or by mathematics, to explain the Trinity. But when you come to lift yourself to the Trinity you have got to get God, the Comforter, to come. When you get homesick, then you want God, the Father; and when you get helpless and sinsick, you want God the Brother and Saviour, which is Christ; and when you get comfortless, you want God, the Comforter. O beloved, think you not that if we come at this great truth heartwise we would find our way to the Comforter, and the Comforter find his way to us? We saw God, the Father,

at Sinai first amongst the bugle notes of that mountain half in conflagration and all in storm. And we saw God, the Elder Brother, at Calvary when daylight's luster sunk to sudden dark. And we discovered the Comforter in the calm and peace of the island Valley of Avilion Supper room, where Jesus, with a voice that was as calm as comfort and as sweet as peace, said: "I will send you the Comforter, so that ye shall not be comfortless. And when the Comforter is come he shall tell you all things concerning myself." And in that room, where not a gust of wind blew from the outer world, this quiet voice revealed the third person in the Trinity. "The Comforter is come." And my perception of the truth, beloved, is, therefore, we must come to it by the heart. When the heart is lonely and bereft and sad, when sin seeks us with solemn threat, when we are fairly submerged in the awful trough of the wicked world, and then by the help of God we are helped out by the clean hand of God, when our sins take us and fairly shame us till we turn our faces from God and say, "I cannot look you in the eyes," then the Comforter comes and says, "Peace, be still, be still." And we turn back and look God in the eyes and say, "I love you." That is the doctrine of the heart, no less majestic, therefor, but the more. This is the doctrine for the un comforted. I came this morning to this house from a funeral. One of this congregation has gone out to keep the

Sabbath in God's sunny springtime land, and she left a little lad, a babe toddling about, and a husband. And what the woman said to her husband a little before she died, not knowing when she might die, but feeling death soon might come to her I will soon narrate. Not so long ago, I might say, I baptized another little baby at their house, when the mother was sick in bed of the infirmity of which she died. She was about to go out to New Mexico, or Arizona, or some place where the sunlight was a little freer than it is here, and before she went she wanted to see her baby baptized. And on a Sunday afternoon I baptized the baby. And the next day, after she kissed the baby with infinite yearning such as only mothers know—kissed the baby and held it tight and said, "Good-by, baby: Good-by," she went out to try and recover health for the baby and herself. And the baby sickened and died, and went on into the land where little children never get lost. And she came home to find the little baby dead, and to bring the little boy with her. And so this is what she said to her husband when she knew that only a little further she would walk into the shadow. "I never knew my baby much, and so I will go on and get acquainted with her; and the baby and I will wait for Mark and you." And so she passed "To where beyond these voices there is peace."

Now, you people are wise in this world's matters, and you people are men and women of discretion;

I ask you to answer me, What it is brings folks into calm like that? What is it when the disruptions of life are imminent brings people to placidity like the placidity of the heart of God? And there is one sole answer in heaven or out, and the answer is, "The Comforter is come." And later or sooner all of us shall have our need, our calling, our clamors, our longing, our unsatisfiedness of heart, and then we shall have to feel our way by the heart to the Comforter, and we shall have to learn by heart and by the heart the doctrine of the Trinity of God, that he is the Father of us in time and in eternity. He is the Brother of us in all the spaces that lie betwixt us and the forever. He is the Comforter.

There is a picture painted by Sir John Millais. It is called "Peace." It is a wonderful picture, in my estimation. It is set in a graveyard looking out across a quiet landscape toward a quiet sky. And I have looked on that picture and have had peace. But I say this morning to this company of hearts that this is a dim picture, ill wrought compared with this, that when the heart is sore distressed and weaponless and life's turmoil has unhanded us, and we are altogether overborne, the heart appeals to God to calm our trouble into quiet and the Comforter is come. The Comforter is come. When the Comforter is come, peace and peace and peace. Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and from God the Christ, and from God the Comforter.

PRAYER: O God the Comforter, come to all our lives this morning and bring to them the unutterable peace in Christ. Amen.



## PRAYER

LORD, hallowed be thy name for this look at thyself.

Thy witlessness is wiser than our witfulness. There is no un wisdom with God.

We pray thee, help us into thy fortress of reliance. Let us with bravery make speed. We leave us utterly in those hands which do no witless things, and in that keeping which outvigils all the watching stars.

We feel so defended, so safeguarded, so planned-for that there is left no room for witless feet, or doubt, or fear, or anxiety. He whose foolishness is wiser than men will not stumble while he carries us through our dark into his dawn. Halleluiah. Amen.

## XVII

### "THE FOOLISHNESS OF GOD"

"The foolishness of God is wiser than men."—*1 Cor. 1. 25.*

It would not be wise for a lesser man than Paul to use this phrase, "The foolishness of God," for it might savor of thoughtlessness or lack of reverence. We must always be calm and in our greater moods when we talk about God. When we are frothy, light as the drifting cobwebs of September noons, we must keep our tongues off from God. Only in the vaster moods of our personality dare we speak to the topic, "God." And I think Paul felt this because it is only once in his lifetime he used it. Just once. This is the once. He felt that it was a dangerous instrument. There are some instruments very rare, very costly, very dangerous, very helpful, which may be in use and required for service only once in a lifetime, but when needed they are needed certainly and instantly. And so this phrase, "foolishness of God," used by a big man in a big mood, for a big matter, is justifiable; and we folks may look at it, ponder it, give much heed to its information, and have large fear of its destination.



Now, if you were talking about men, you would not need to hesitate to use the word "foolishness." Everybody of us is foolish. Some more so, some persistently, some only occasionally; but foolishness is goods we all of us have in stock. Foolishness to be defined is lack of wisdom. The lack of measuring up to the largest reasonableness—that is lack of wisdom; and it may be seriously inferred with this definition in thought that all of us are foolish. God must have occasion to smile at us a great many times, us foolish people that don't know we are foolish. People that know they are foolish, that know their incapacity, know they jumble words, know they jumble thoughts, know they have scant access to the acclivities of God, would walk modestly and stoop a little as they stand. God never laughs at them, no matter how their language plays them tricks or how their thoughts become vagabonds. But when a man is little and doesn't know it, when he is priggish and struts, when he thinks he is a learned man and is only a pedant, when he thinks to inform the Almighty, when he supposes himself to be God's schoolmaster and takes God in schoolmaster fashion to school, then God must be amused at him. You must never think it past God to be amused. He has created us like he is, and God must be amused at the pedantry of some and the omniscieny of others. People arise every now and then who conceive that until they came nobody was in

town. They think that their appearance was the beginning of things. These people are jokes; and God knows it. It is a pity they don't know it. They would be less amusing though more informing.

A man arose one time and said he could make a better world than God made. And people said, How would you do it? Well, he said, I would make a full moon all the month. Wouldn't that be delicious? A full moon all the month! And that man wanted to tinker with the universe! That dolt wanted to get hold of the dial plate of the universe of God and make it stationary. It is the glory of God that he puts the control of his larger matters beyond the foolish, frivolous activities of such eager, silly fingers. Now, you might have a full moon all the month, but the poetry would be gone out of the moonlight. Anybody who doesn't know that the poetry of the moonlight is sweet, winsome, wistful, and uncertain, doesn't know about poetry. What delight it is to watch for the coming of the new moon! Some people don't watch; they watch to see it over the right shoulder—that is all. I shouldn't care over which shoulder I saw the new moon, so, please God, I had the chance to see it in its face. The sickle of silver shining 'mid the stars that glisten and vanish nigh the glowing coals of the hearth of sunset, shouldn't we miss out of the poetry of the sky that wonder if that man had always his full moon in his

heavens? And the moon grows and changes, and the almanac makers have found it out, and all lovers have committed it to heart, and everybody who woos knows when the moon rises, because you have to wait when you are making love so you can walk home in the moonlight; and the later it comes up the earlier and the better. Now, this wise man that would have tampered with the moon wasn't a poet. Thank God, He who made the universe is the chiefest poet the world has ever seen and the chiefest poet that has ever done poetry—not written but done poetry. And this man couldn't have bettered this universe. He would have simplified it, but he would have sillified it and made it monotonous and prosaic. Such a foolish man he was!

Every now and then a man arises who says that God ought to administer the universe by special laws and not by general laws; that for every individual life and for every individual procedure and every national movement God ought to contrive special laws. And those wise-aces who would so recontrive the universe would have an insane universe. You would never know when you fell whether you would fall down or up. It is because gravitation in the universe is fixed to drag downward that we know if the stars fall, they fall downward; and if the rocks from the mountain fall, they fall downward; if the oak acorns fall, they fall downward; and if

a child running along the walks stubs his toe, he falls downward. It is because of this very same general law that we count with infallible correctness a thousand eons in the future that such and such things shall transpire, because God is not tinkering with the universe. God has put his machinery in the universe at work, and only as some great mood demands does the Almighty countermand his orders. He does his sometime miracle, but lets life mainly run at life's own business. "A soul that sinneth, it shall die." That is a general law. "A man that drinks shall be drunken." That is a general law. God is not interfering to change man's destination. He is not reshaping his general laws for the individual instance, but he puts over everybody and under everybody the great oversky or ground of general law; and the man that would in his wisdom have God administer by particularities would simply introduce jumble and jangle and dissolution, and the world would be a maniac.

A man says I could improve the world. I would have no death. I would have no graveyards, no monuments. I would have people live forever. And the wise man who would introduce the change of no death in the world unless he could introduce the change of no sin in the world and no decrepitude would be easy chief among the foolish of earth. I tell you, men and women—and you know it without my telling—that if we had no death, life would be absolutely

pitiful. The reason wags like a cornstalk wagging in the wind, the finest faculty grows dim as when we are looking through smoky glasses, the superbest intelligence wavers when it lifts its fitful fingers to adjust the timepiece on the mantel of the years. And you would have a world crammed with decrepitude, crammed with unintelligence, crammed with foolishness, crammed with desolation that could not die. God has let death come in to a misprized and a misconclusioned world to tell there is a door out of it. To tell the plain truth, people that want to tamper with the universe of God are very liable to come under the castigation of this phrasing, "The foolishness of God is wiser than men."

He who framed this system, He who fixed this solid orb, He who hung the world on nothing, He who hung the stars in the spaces and commits them to the farthest journey of his universe, it might be very corrective to our thinking to consider that He knows; and we are not yet grown old enough or wise enough or strong enough to give counsel to the Almighty. And it is a happy thing that this phrase, "the foolishness of God," strikes our thought and lifts it, puts its compelling hand on the shoulder and makes us stand stock still. "The foolishness of God." Is God ever foolish like men are? Never. Is God ever off duty? Never. Does God ever have secondary moods of insight and inspiration? Never. Is God always on the watch for the morning hour

and the morning sunrise moods? Always. Does God ever have to think a second time to bring his large administrations to pass? Never. But do you not know what the apostle means and the apostle says, that the things a man would call foolishness in God are wiser than men's wisest moods?

Here is the matter of fertilization of the earth. How is it going to be done? You don't know. You cannot guess. And God fertilizes his earth with earth worms. God plows the ground where the crops are to root with ten million million of earth worms. Does God plow his ground that way? Is not there any better way to do it? Well, God's foolish method is the apparently trivial means by which he achieves large purposes. They are wiser than men, and the silly earth worms that on sultry, rainy days crawl in the springtime or the summer after the gush of rain in a gust of wild summer torrent, those are God's unhired plowboys that have to plow the fields to make the grass grow. And after all these centuries of these unpaid plowmen science is just finding out that but for them culture of the ground would cease and the enrichment of the soil would be a thing of the past. This matter of growing crops to feed the world, this matter of growing crops to feed the herds that feed the world, this matter of the hay crop and the corn crop, and the cereal crop; this matter of fruitage

of the vineyard and the orchards, is it true the fertility for those fruits and the growing grain and the vegetable garden are dependent, in the economy of God, on the foolishness of the earth-worm to plow the ground? So it is. But God's utter folly is wiser than the wisdom of the wisest men.

Here is the matter of cross-fertilization of plants. Darwin, who knew more about such things in their sphere than any man who ever lived, wrote, I think, his most singular and suggestive volumes on the *Cross-fertilization of Plants*, showing that a plant cannot get fertilized by itself; that the pollen from one plant must visit another plant lest that plant be infertile. And so God has hired the wind, and God hires the bees, and God hires the various insects that seem to have no particular service in the sky. God hires them, and pays them in money convenient to his purse; hires them to fertilize all the flowers. Now, then, if there ever were a farfetched way of doing things, to you and me, that would seem the farfetched way; but, on the other side, if there ever were a beautiful way of doing things, that is the beautiful way. That altruism taught in the teachings of Christ—that is the teaching here. Can one flower be sufficient to itself? It cannot. You see the cornstalk grow, and the stalk runs high against the sun, and the tassel flings out pollen on the silk of corn, so that corn may be produced. Now, then, according



to the tassel, as it is with the silk, so it shall be what shall be the corn crop. Can one part of the corn go on without the other? No. God's altruism happens in the simplicities and the magnitudes of his universe. And you would never have thought that up. You would have every cornstalk be its own master and its own mistress. You would have every flower dwell solitary. You would have said, "Let me be my own housekeeper and fertilize my own flowers." And God sends the bumblebee; and it is just as well to let him alone in action. That bumblebee turns somersaults in the flower and gets some of the gold in the pollen of that flower and plays in it and thinks he is having fun; and the truth of the business is he is God's hired man to make the next flower fertile. Would you ever have dreamed of it? Well, privately and pathetically, you would not in millions of centuries. Why? You don't know enough. That is nothing against you. That is something for God. His foolishness is wiser than men. Do his flowers bloom? Yes. Do his colors abide? Yes. Do his fruits continue to grow and fall in wondrous plenty to the ground? Yes. And yet all of them are dependent on this trivial method of continuance.

Here is the doctrine of evolution, which, taken at its full value, means only this, that God took a roundabout way to do things. If anybody



here has schooled himself to think that evolution is a method by which this earth can get along without God, I have the honor to suggest to him he is a very superficial thinker. No man who has schooled himself in the evolutionary hypothesis and has schooled himself to facts as science has adduced them but must know that God's necessity in the world, instead of being diminished by evolution, is incredibly increased. The more I read of evolution as it is supposed to be, the more the miracle works through my brain. If God could have made things stick to their business through unnumbered centuries, and held everything to the thing which was to be, that is the miracle of it. Does God make the world in a minute? That would be a joke to God. He can do those things. It is no trouble for God. He hath eternity in his heart and in his hands. And if you had a universe created by a single fiat of the Almighty, that would be simplicity itself. But if, on the other side, you have a universe made by the most prolonged and practically infinite mutations until at last there came the coronation of the world of the Almighty, and the morning stars set up a-singing because a world had brooded and produced a man, you have got not one miracle, but multitudes and multitudes of them.

It is a foolish way to proceed. Privately, I don't think the evolutionist scientists know as much as they think they do. They could not.

It would be bad for them. It never occurs to them that there is anything they don't know. But I think there is something, I can't remember what it is, but there is something they really don't know. And if you look at the world thus far advanced they say, "This is the way it is, and this is the way it is." But the thing I think of it is this: if God wanted to do that thing, what a foolish method he had! Ah, but if he did that way, still it is according to his plan. "The foolishness of God is wiser than men." However the oak tree got here, here it is. However life sprang into this planet, here it is; and it catches the planet by the throat and holds it still and says, "Tell me your secret." And the universe does. Man holds the universe of stars by the neck and says, "Tell me how you spin and roll your vast circuits and not dim nor die nor lose your light." And they say, "Let me go." And you let them go, and they go swinging on in their journeys and say, "Gravitation." But if God made man, that amazement of genius set to music, by evolution, we cannot deny it was a foolish way to produce a masterful conclusion.

There is the matter of singing birds. Why don't all birds sing alike? Well, you don't know, do you? and I won't tell you. I don't know. Aren't you delighted that they don't? That is all. A quail piping in the grain is good, but a few are plenty. A robin singing on the roof—

O, it is so sweet!—but a few of them will make music for a city or a countryside. And God has put himself to the frivolous business of making a bird's throat and has spent more care on it than Pistrucci ever spent in carving a strangely beautiful stone into a strangely beautiful cameo. Is God in no greater business than making a bird's voice? You think it is small business for him, don't you? He ought not to be creating birds' throats. Well, he is. You don't think he ought to be creating larks? Well, God is. You think he ought to be making stars? Well, he is. You think he ought to be lighting the dawns? Well, he is.

God is One Body that can do all sorts of things at once and never fumble one of them. You cannot do more than one thing at once; and sometimes the preacher can't do one; and some of you are as bad as the preacher. You cannot do two things at once, and some of you cannot do one thing. When you try to read the book and listen to what some one is saying, the book or the saying goes to pieces. Sometimes on a car I see people reading a book diligently with the eyes and hearing people's conversation with their ears, but the pages don't turn very much, I have noticed. God is so big and multifarious in his plans and glorious in his executions that he can do all things at once. And you say, "Are you making God sit down and having every bird's throat different from another?" You say

that is a small business for God. Yes, very small business for a small God, but glorious business for a big God. You watch the birds. You see the yellow bird on the telephone wires, you see the lark in the early dawn, you see the black-bird jabbering and calling his confreres together and saying "It is time to move out; winter is coming; snowfall will be here by and by." You hear the jabbering and the music and the carol. And then, by and by, thousands and ten thousands of birds' voices—and God has got his orchestra. I never see and hear an orchestra that I don't wonder about it, and I wonder what curiously devised intelligence created lots of those instruments, of such absurd shapes to try and produce music. Sometimes when I have a dear friend with me at the orchestra I find time to whisper through the music, "What horn is that?" There is a horn I use a great deal. I know what it is. But the horn this fellow is making music on? "So and so," he says, whichever instrument it is.

And sometimes it is so strange and so homely and sometimes so uncouth. Now, God has his orchestra made up of many pieces. But God takes time to make his orchestra of birds' throats and he takes time to write their music for them. Is God so small that he can sit down and write out music for the birds to sing so they never miss a note? And is God put to such childish matters that he is shaping the birds' throats so

that when the voice leaps to it it will leap to music? O, beloved, that is the glory of God, that he has time for every little thing. And these people who write about the birds, do you notice they have taken lately to writing on the page a musical scale? "This is how the bird sings, you know." You say, "Here, listen to the scale." You could never deduce the birds' talk through looking at the book or running the scale on the piano. Never, never in the world. The bird wouldn't know it himself. Why, that is the tune he has, but it doesn't go on a piano. Is God doing little things like that? Well, you know that he is, don't you? And it is wiser than men. Who invented the piano? I don't know. Who invented the organ? I don't know. Who invented the harp? I don't know. David played it. And the man long ago told of in the book who invented the harp and the organ, who is he? Nobody knows. Was it a race or a man? No odds. But all the instruments of music are not to compare with the infinite melody and the infinite variety of those little bird-notes that God has taken pains with so they will never go wrong.

There is the matter of the colors on the leaves. Pretty soon it will be autumn. Some of us are falling into "the sere and yellow leaf" ourselves, but the woods are doing it every year. I am so glad God thought it out. If God were not a Poet Infinite he never could think those things out. Here are the green leaves, lovely enough

to last a thousand years. When a naked branch sways in the March air and sprangles out in the wonder of sprightly green, isn't that sweet enough to hang there a banner forever? Yes. But God won't let it, and when the autumn comes and goes the leaves die. Now, when it is coming autumn you folks who want to be poets go out into the woods, go out where the sugar maple sets its top on fire and hangs out a hundred banners colored as of a wine drench on them, go out where the beech tree looks as if filled with fire, go and look where the elm tree hangs its sullen leaves as if about to die of anger. Go where the sycamore leaves crinkle and scowl. Go where the forests set their thousand fires. What makes God do it? You don't know. I don't know. But he does it. His little things are beyond the miracles of men. And you ask scientists why it is and you will get no word from them. I asked them once myself, not that I thought they knew, but I wanted to hear them. I wanted to see them do it. They don't know. Science cannot tell how one seed differs from another in the science alembic. He cannot tell that. Cannot tell why one tree has a leaf different from another leaf. But God knows. I don't need to know. He had leisure and he had life, and he wanted to do it; and he was a painter and he was a poet. I thank God, in a month the woods will be on fire, set on fire of God. How did he do it?

Brothers, if there were leisure or time to go

through the large discourse of these seemingly frivolous things that God does, it would fill the heart with wonder. The foolishness of God is wiser than men. God does not need to do big things to do the great things. All he needs to do is to call on the nether forces to do a thing that he has thought out. When God wants to build a continent how does he do it? How could he do it? Plenty of ways. He can thrust up from the bottom of the seas sheer granite out of which the roots of the mountains are formed. He can do that. If he wants to build a continent, he can set a little coral at work, building, building, building. He can build his continents so if he wants it. Such foolish methods! Such inconsequential methods. But by and by islands and continents are builded up and by and by where once was only the rolling of the mighty sea now there are inhabited cities. God knows how to do large things by incompetent methods.

And when it comes into the realm of religion, when it comes into the higher realm of human destiny, when it comes to the human soul, when it comes to the validation of man's greatest particulars, when it comes to certifying human endurance through eternities and putting on the stamp of man's immortality, still God has trivialities which shame man's magnificence and shame man's majesty.

When God wanted to save the world he did



it by a baby's cradle and by a criminal's cross. Ah me, ah me, did God think he could save a race of grown-ups by a baby's cradle and by a baby's cry and by a baby's dimpled hands and by a baby's shrill voice and by a baby's smile? Did God think that a baby's hands could pluck the nails out of the world's hands and drag life down from a cross and put virtue up and enthrone nobility and put goodness at the summit of heaven? Could a baby's hands do that? No, they could not. Ah, you said, did you, friend, “You will require a great man for that”? And God said, “A baby can do it.” Are you going to save a world from wickedness by a cross with a criminal on it? You are not. Hold a minute. Stop. He did. He did. Are you going to save a world by grace? What is that? Oh, this, what God lends to the least of us and the largest of us. Grace is what gets us all inside the better life. Grace is what gets us all inside the heart of God. Grace is what builds us all a house erected in the skies. Grace, such a foolish method! Just to leave people here. Just to let the shipwreck waters do their worst. Just to let the wild anguish of the great deep rage on. Just to let life's despairs grip and crush and fall. Yes. Won't God help us? I didn't say he wouldn't. But I said he wouldn't take us out of it. Just leave us in the thick of it, where the spears rain and the bullets fly and the lightnings flame and the thunders crash. And when you have grace



—the foolish method God has devised whereby the weakest folks that ever drew breath are stronger than giants maddened with new wine—then folks are ready for anything.

There was a girl I knew, a daughter of a Methodist preacher. I knew him well; a dear man he was, and often came to my study and often in the pulpit sitting by me by day or dark, in the morning or nighttime service. And his daughter was getting ready to flit to where sickness is no inhabitant and where sorrow hath not any victories. And she languished along and smilingly went out, wistfully, but gladly. And on the last night of her life this weak, weak girl, wasted by months of slow and sullen encroachment of disease, said to her father: "Dear papa, go and sleep and get some rest. I will be happier so. I am quite well and I am very glad. Dear papa, go and lie down and take your rest." And he went and lay down and took his rest, and when he wakened he came in to kiss her; and she, too, had lain down and was taking her rest; and the lips he kissed were the lips of a dead girl. And the silly method, the foolish method, the incompetent method of grace to the lonely and strength to the weak and hope to the disappointed and giving a lit lamp in a dark valley and a fire on a dark hearth—that method had been enough to send her, a weak girl, out into eternity, smiling and thinking about somebody else. "Dear papa," said the dying girl, "dear papa, you are tired.

Go lie down and rest. I shall feel happier so." Grace, grace. When the waves are harsh and frightful, when the hill is steep, when the clouds are brooding and thundrous, when the wild surf beats battle music, then God's plan of giving enough strength for the minute will bring us with great presence of mind through the surges into the heavenly hope, into the deathless morning. For it must still abide, true as truth, and truth that outlasts time and lasts through eternities, that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men."

PRAYER: O God, we bless thee for these large matters thou hast projected upon our thought. We do not feel adequate to them yet. We bless thee thou hast let us handle thy processes and that we are able to get a look on thee and to live near to thee. Bless all. May God's trivial matters fascinate us above a song sung of an angel. We pray, for Christ's sake. Amen.

## PRAYER

O LORD, my God, I am abased. Thy holiness smites me into the dust. Thy purity shames me into blushes and tears, howbeit repentant tears. My own penury in goodness is my shame. How can I be lifted up? How can I lift up my eyes toward the pure God who dwelleth in inaccessible light and height of holiness? My best days are unworthy. The black clouds sometimes obscure my sky but on the clearest days films of cloud render my sky a distant haze. Purity is not in me when I watch thee. "The angels are not pure in thy sight," so said the seer; and so I know if angels are not pure in the sight of the holy God, what am I, a man? Pity me, O Lord. How shall I come to thy holy hill and how much less dwell in thy holy house?

Have mercy upon me, O Lord.

Purge me, sprinkle me with hyssop dipped in the prevailing blood of Christ. That is my solitary hope, the blood of Christ. May I have that cleansing that in due time I may be allotted a place among the blood-washed and redeemed, I pray in Christ. Amen.

## XVIII

### A LORD'S DAY PASTORAL

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."—*Psa. 23. 1.*

I THINK to call this sermon "A Lord's Day Pastoral," and the text is this: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

There are some things we never can grow tired of. One thing is the shadows cast in quiet water; and one thing is the blowing of the spring wind's breath; and one thing is the companionship of those we love; and one thing is a love story. I read this week Crockett's *The Standard Bearer*, and, as usual with him, the battle jostles and life is very strenuous; but, likewise, as is usual with him, life is very tender and very sweet. And I think some of the most pious of pious reading is a sweet love story, because it always refreshes our best life to know that the sweetest things we have ever been told about love are not quite the truth. They are always this side the truth and not that. We never get tired of a love story.

And one of the things we never get tired of is the Shepherd Psalm. More people love that poem than any poem ever written. More people

know that poem than any poem that was ever written. Dr. Maclure was not the first man nor the last that, dying, limped his way through the poem of the Shepherd's Psalm. People have read that psalm or repeated it with the rain of many tears dashing in their faces. People have loved that poem and have repeated it with the wildest winds of trouble that ever blew blowing on them. People have put that poem underneath their tired head for a sleeping pillow. People have leaned on that poem for a staff better than alpenstock when they climbed the wicked winter mountains. People have had that poem when their way was black and very arduous. O hearts, this is God's pastoral! Some long-since poet, he of the harp and the shepherd's voice and the shining eyes and bounding steps, he saw it and felt it, and then did like all poets do—said the thing he saw and felt, and that is the Shepherd Psalm.

It is very, very sweet and it is very, very tender. I don't know anything that I think is as tender as this Shepherd Psalm, except a hand reaching out in the dark of the night when you moan in your bed, and the hand reaches out and touches you. I wonder if there is any one in this company who at some time or other has not had some dear and unforgetful hand reach out in the dark when you moaned a little and touched you and gave you a pat or two and said: "Sick, dear? Sick, dear?" And the hand that touched

you—I am not asking where it is now—but it was so tender, wasn't it? So tender. And this poem is tender like that; and my purpose at this moment is to see if that Shepherd hand cannot get hold of every one in this company, so that, please God, we might all be led out into green pastures and keep quiet beside the still waters.

I want in the language of the fields and of the spring to let this poem of the spring and of the fields invade your life. So many of you are from the country, and so many of you love it. The other night I was speaking somewhere, and a Kansas girl came to me after the meeting was over. "Oh," she said, "it is so nice to see some one from Kansas." It was nice. I liked it myself. I think she thought I looked a little like the greenery of the prairie. I didn't mind it. I loved it. And there are times when we all of us have the itch to be out of doors. Say, beloved, who's blowing the bugles now? Why, the south wind's blowing the bugles now. Who's beckoning with winsome fingers now? Why, spring is beckoning with winsome fingers now. But this is a poem of the springtime. "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." So, with plain countryman speech at this hour, with the tang of the fields, I trust, and the smell of growing things, and the winsome call of the bird that has come back to sing and say, "The winter hath altogether vanished," I would like to talk with

you in this Lord's Day pastoral about the Shepherd and the sheep.

The Shepherd leads his flock outdoors. Sometimes the sheep do not know about it—more's the pity; but the Shepherd is bound for the out of doors. Out of the inclosure to the great unclosed fields out of doors. That is where the pasture is. That is where the water runnels sing. That is where the daisies are abloom. That is where the splendor of the sunshine washes all the hills. That is where, down the wide, leaning floor of the far-off river, the swaying springtime grasses toss to bloom and beauty. Out of doors. The Lord is my Shepherd. And he is leading us out of doors.

This perception of the world and the wonder of the out of doors I think is a strange impress of the hand of God. That's where he wants folks to go—out of doors. We are so shut in. We are so cluttered up. We are so crowded. O, the out of doors! But the Shepherd of the sheep beckons, and if you will follow the Lord your Shepherd, you will find that sometimes, anyhow, he will lead you out of doors.

On Tuesday of this week the Shepherd beckoned at my door—the good and gracious Lord Shepherd—and I went down the country way, for I had seen in the winter a stream that I thought, when springtime came, would be a bounty of beauty. And I was not amiss in my judgment. And I came to where a stream was

running vagabondwise, and where the wind was blowing turbulently, like March winds, and where the elm trees were springing out into promise of green and not the achievings of it, and where the plum trees were stooped under their perfume and bloom, and where the green sward was all flamed out with dandelions. And I found a bank against the blowing wind; and I found a bank all set to violets; and I made my fire with driftwood and lay on the smoke side of the fire, so that the smoke blew in my face. Ah, it was so good to get the breath of forests that had been and were not now. And, lying on the green sward, elbow deep in violets and violets flaming blue under my eye—O, God's out-of-doors! And the winds sobbed and sung, and madrigals, wafted out on the winds and the sky, flapped like eagles; and to the rim of the earth the trees swayed and stood upright, and swayed; and all the wind gales called: "Spring cometh! Spring cometh!" And I lay on my bed of violets, with the yellow and splendor of the dandelions just beyond and the perfume of the incense of the fire in my nostrils. And the Good Shepherd had brought me hither. And I made my prayer and I sang my psalm. God wants people out of doors. And since Jesus spent so much time out of doors till his face had the touch of the wind and the rain on it, I would think, beloved, that people who love to know him would follow him into the



out of doors where God is working the miracle of the spring, where God's fragrances are distilled.

Do you know why Robert Browning's "Saul" grips so many people? A good many people don't like Robert Browning. Why? Because so many don't know him. Some schoolmaster introduced him with a ferule and a book. But if you will go out with him, kick your heels up with him, and tumble around with him, do the boy act in the woods with him, you will love him. But so many people who don't care for anything other of Browning love "Saul." Why? Well, one reason, I think, is that it was the wonder of the out of doors. Robert Browning is not an out-of-doors poet. He is a psychic poet. He is the profoundest digger into the soul since Shakespeare, and in some regards he is a profounder digger than Shakespeare. But this psychological poet in "Saul" revels in out-of-doors. Upon my heart, when I read it I see the beckoning hills and I hear the sound of water trickling. I hear the calling of the winds. I see the multitude of lambs bleating for their mothers. Out of doors, O, my soul!

There is a great patch of outdoors in front of everybody's house, and I not only think, but I know, that everybody owes it to his religious nature to know that the God Shepherd beckons out of doors. Do you know that the outdoors doesn't wait? To-morrow the lilacs will be sputtering out of bloom and the day after some

other thing will be rushing into bloom. You have got to take nature while nature hastes. Nature won't sit still, prim and puckered, like a man having his photograph taken. It will not. You cannot get nature to sit down by saying, "Keep still; don't budge." Nature won't keep still. A man will be still and frozen up as in a refrigerator process, but nature won't. You must get nature on the wing. O life, O life, thy Shepherd whose name is God is going out of doors. Go out with him.

The trouble with a good many people who go out of doors is they go out with a botany. That is bad. Don't do that unless you are studying botany, and are willing to take the consequences. Some people go out of doors with an ornithologist. That is enough to shake anybody's faith in man and bird. Don't do that. Go out with the bird-ologist. That's better. Go out and watch the black crow talk back. Go out and watch the spurt of fire on the robin's breast and ask him who painted his breast. Go out and ask the bobolink where he learned to spill his strange music out. Go out and see the flowers blooming. Don't ask them their names. Some of them don't know; they are ignorant flowers. Some of them are like girls getting ready to be married—they don't quite know the name they will get. Go out and see things out of doors. I have seen some people go out in a

sheep's pasture and say, "What is this sheep's name?" And the sheep would bleat at them, and it was a becoming bleat. It wasn't wasted. Things like that ought to be bleated at. We don't so much care about names as things. The Shepherd leads his flock out of doors; and he will lead us so.

And then the Shepherd leads his flock out of the house, out and up to where there is sky. Houses, all of them, have low-roofed rooms. I am not faulting it; I am talking about it. Some of them that have very low roofs are so cozy in winter. I like them because it reduces coal bills and increases warmth. Some of them are very high. I have been in cathedrals whose great domes ran up like to the sky; and I have been in kings' palaces lacerated with the years, yet spacious kings' palaces; but they were roofed. And you had to have a window to look into the sky. And when the Good Shepherd comes he leads his flocks out to the sky where it is all window, spacious, strangely beautiful. Go out where you can see spaces and out where you can feel spaces. And since Jesus was here, and on a morning mankind never can choose to forget, walked up through the heavens and showed us the sky was wider than we thought; since then the sky has grown so strangely wide and winsome and wonderful. That is what we are needing, to be beckoned up. We are tied down like tethered eagles; we are put into narrow

places of vocation like poor canaries that are put in little houses down in the bird store—houses no bigger than your two clinched fists. O, they were meant, they were meant, to baffle the winds with their yellow wings, and to toss their bird music into the sky. And we are meant to be out where there is room for growth, and out where there is room for song, and out where the eternal wonder of the universe can come and kiss us on the lips, and have no door bell for the ringing and no low-roofed room to make souls stoop for the coming in.

God, I take it, is always shepherding us to take us out, out into the spaciousness of life, out till we feel the world is a little space, till we feel we can ram our arm through the breadth of the world and grasp the world and wear it on the arm as a shield. That is how it comes to pass that men grow great, when they come to feel there is no locality; that we do not live at Chicago, but everywhere on the earth. Men and women, if you never felt life's cramp, I miss my guess! If you never felt that life was cramped, or you had been thrust out from spaciousness into lack of space. O God, call us, beckon us out where there is room and high sky and night sky and day sky and sky eternal.

Then a curious thing, I think, about the Shepherd of the sheep is that the Shepherd lets his sheep out into the storm. I suppose that has

caused more thought than any other single fact of life—this, that we are led out into the storm. I suppose that has caused more exclamatory and deeper grieving in good men's lives and good women's lives than any single thing in Christianity. Perchance they feel that by how much the Lord was their Shepherd by so much should they be led away from storms. But the Shepherd leads his sheep out into storms.

I was one time in a room a hundred feet above the earth, and a chimney swift had found his foolish way into the room; and from scratchings on the window it was very apparent that all the day, and maybe days, he had tried to find his way through the window into the sky. And I chanced to come there late one night and found the swift baffled with the light I held in my hand; and my heart was so sore with pity for the baffled bird I climbed and caught the trembling bit of bird and feather in my hand and opened the window and put him out into the out-of-doors for which he was meant and where his life was. Out from death I put him into life. But he turned his face my way and saw the flicker of the light and flew back in. And so he did time and time again, not knowing that the sky was his place, that the sky was about him, and not the peril a hundred feet below. He had wings, but didn't try them. But at last I took the tremulous bird and flung him out into the sky, black and starless, and unlit by

any lamp, and closed the window. And did you not observe that by my throwing him out into the sky I did not hurt him but saved him? God must do that with us. Sometimes we think our safety is our home. What I am saying to the praise of God is that sometimes he casts us out into jeopardy; because God is more concerned about our strength and our service and our enlarged life than he is that we have no peril.

O heart, how you ache! Did God send the ache? No. But God let you out where the ache was. There are worse troubles than heart-aches. Say, heart, have you been scuffed by the storm? Has the rose you held withered while you held it? Has your heart's blood spurted out, so deep was the wound in your heart? And sometimes you gasped for breath and blood together and cry, "If God help me not, I die!" What does the Shepherd do? Lead you out where the storms are. And I have seen, as some of you may have seen, on the Scotch hills, when the rain was drizzling hard and the fogs had wrapped themselves around the mountains, I have seen the shepherds standing amidst the drench of the rain, not taking the flock out of the storm, but staying with the flock in the storm.

The Shepherd takes his flock out where the winds may be hard and the fury may be very pitiless, but that is where we are meant to be.

And, beloved, if you think that God is trying the conservatory plan on your heart, you misunderstand him. In the conservatory they shut out the storm and baffle the winds, and what they grow is flowers that the first spring breath leaning to kiss them would break. But God leads his flock out where the winds are wildest and the storms are hardest and the fury seems like the fury of destruction. And God is concerned not that we get on easily, but that we get on to something. It is better, men and women, I will tell you, to get out where the tempests blow worst and to feel that you are meant for this, and that you can meet it, nor it need to master you—better than to be sheltered about by eternal calm. So that the Shepherd's method is to lead us out into the storm and put a calm in us and not us in the calm. And when I have thought of that, as I have many, many times, particularly when I have seen scars on many faces, when I have fairly seen the pincers of pain plucking at the face, when I have seen people put on the rack when there was no inquisitor at home, then I have been fairly amazed at it. Then I have seen that God was not keeping us at home; but is keeping us in the storm and in the calm. Out in the storm—O Shepherd, fetch us home! O Shepherd, the wind blows bleak, fetch us home! O Shepherd, it is so tempestuous here, fetch us home! And the Shepherd smiles and fronts the storm and says, "The storm is good."



And I think I may not be speaking at random to this presence when I say a good many of you have been out in the tempests; and you have been troubled by them. The tempest of calamity took your fortune and cut it off as with a sword; and you have bare subsistence now. Never mind. Some of you have had children, but you are childless now. Some of you have troubles which you cannot name, except with the tragic poet's voice. Never mind. You had them, did you? Yes. You were not put here to be shielded from them. No, not that. You were put here to show that you were not meant to hide from the storm, but to abide the storm; and out of the storm cometh peace.

Then the Shepherd goes out with his flock and stays with them. It is never hard to be anywhere when the Shepherd is along. You read, did you, this week in the paper of the woman shut in some high floor; and the fire shut her away from the staircase with the flame; and, the baby on her arm and love in her heart, she came down the fire escape, mother and baby? I wish I knew the woman. It would be good to look in her face. When women do these great, sweet woman things that make God surprised I always like to see their faces, because it is like looking at a page of God's book. When love doesn't know enough to stop, when love doesn't know its sacrifice, isn't that beautiful? Around the baby the arm and down the long,



dreary, perilous descent! O brothers and sisters, what I wondered at was whether the baby was asleep, or whether the baby knew, or whether the baby cared. Had not the babe the mother, and the arm, and the heart? Safety. What was the odds where they were if the mother were there? And where the mother was there was great safety. And if the Shepherd is around, what odds? What odds? The trouble with us is danger is appalling, and we are shepherdless. But out in the appalling danger with the Shepherd it makes no difference about the danger.

Sometimes I have been in my boat on boiling waters; and the fury of the storm was pitiless, tempestuous; and between a watery grave and me was only a film of a cypress wood board, that only: but that was safety. And when the storm played pitch battles with me I had fun. And when the waves thrust out their spears then I had fun. And the tumbled waters jumbled their reaching waves together. Then I had fun. Because the boat was my safety. Ah, people does it make much difference, therefore, how bitter the day if you have the Shepherd? I profess, and I read the story partially out of my own heart and partially out of yours, that it is not any real difference about the weather; and the only real difference is about the Shepherd. The Shepherd! Did the lamb care that night how black the night was when the Shepherd had it on his heart? Oh, no. Did the

lamb care how long the journey was? It did not. It slept upon the Shepherd's heart. And I take it that is what folks want, the Shepherd. How long will it be through the wearying journey? I don't know. How long will it be till we have rest? I do not know. But, beloved, I will promise you one thing as a minister of God, who has provoked an answer from the lips of Christ, and who has seen the baffled fury of many and many a storm—when Christ is there the conclusion will be peace. About us the Shepherd. That is enough.

And the Shepherd leads the sheep out to where they totally rely on him. You thought the world was settled down, did you? And wouldn't act up any more, didn't you? You thought the world had quit its peevish childhood and its frolics. You thought it, didn't you? And then the world just did a thing to show you. Yes, it did. The earthquake came. Brothers and sisters, the Good Shepherd owns the pasture green, owns the south wind's breath, owns the north wind's breath, owns the pasture field, owns the sky. All is in his hands. We cannot live without him. He is our Benefactor. And that is what I think is a high crime and misdemeanor of a great many of us—we think that because we work for our board that we make the board. We say: "I provide for myself." "I insured myself." "I have provided a competency

for my family." "I have built a house." "I have constructed a business." "I have gotten on pretty well. It is so many years since I came to this town, and now I am pleasantly situated. I—" But hadn't you the Shepherd? What was he doing? Didn't he lend you strength? Didn't he give you a chance? Didn't he give you two hands with two hands' might? Didn't he give you endurance? Didn't he give you aspiration and a touch of genius? Didn't he give you forbearance? Why, if God had snuffed out the sun you couldn't have been an artist. Why, if God had struck down the mountains, you couldn't have been engineers. Why, you couldn't do anything without him. The Shepherd. O Shepherd of the pasture, lead us to God!

And then when the day is over the Shepherd leads the sheep back home. I am a man who lives out where people live, thank God. I am not shut in. I am not a hothouse flower. I belong out where everybody is, good folks and bad folks, church members and nonchurch members, smart and unsmart, and I like them all. I don't know which I like better, the smart or unsmart. The people who are smart make you weary sometimes, and the people who are unsmart don't. I like them all. Out where people are prosperous and have lots of money, and out where people are not prosperous and haven't any money, and both are good. It is nice to be poor; and I suppose it is nice to be rich. But

I am out where both are. And that is what seems to be bountifully good—when it gets toward night and the Shepherd leads his flock toward home. Home, after the day's work. Men going home, women going home, children going home. And if you will speak of death, the difference between a man dying without Christ and with Christ is this, that the man without Christ is going he does not know where, but he is not going home. He is out toward a land of strangers; and every whither he walks is all strange. And the man that has Christ, at eventide the Shepherd leads him home. And I think, I think, that some of these times you and I shall journey, whither going? And he will say, "Home."

Whose face is at the door? Father's. Home. And the father at the door of heaven smiling and beckoning and calling "Hurry home." Whose face is at the door? Mother's, saying, "Come, hurry for the kiss that awaits you." Home. Whose face at the door? His, the Shepherd's. Home. And there is the firelight; and there is the home light; and there is rest; and there is help; and there is eternal calm. Getting home. And I think I need not adventure this, that there is nothing so sweet in all the poems of Grecian mythology as this, that Christ's folks dying are only Christ's folks taking a short-cut to get home. Getting home.

And the Shepherd's face. God is the Shepherd.

Home. And every bleating lamb and every sheep within the pasture bleating, and the Shepherd is calling: "Evening, and home, evening, and home." And they are following, all the sheep. Evening, and home; and the fold and the Shepherd, and one fold and one Shepherd; and the doors are shut and the stars are lit and the night is come and we are come home.

I went at early day to bid a man good-by on his journey to the infinite. I had known him in other days in another city. He lay there very still. I didn't go to deliver a panegyric or farewell. I only went to say as I wiped the tears from his daughter's face with my hand; and the tears of his wife's face fell on the back of my hand as I held her hand in consolation, I went to say: "He is on his journey, he has gotten home. On his journey home." Heart, this is "A Lord's day pastoral," "The Lord is my Shepherd; I cannot want, I shall not want—forever."

PRAYER: O Lord, we thank thee for this tender saying of thine. Make it as dew to the flowers, so to our hearts, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY  
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

441174



## A PRAYER LEARNT FROM FLOWERS AND STARS

LORD GOD of our life, we would fain have our devotion to thee as effortless as the lift of a sea wave and as passionate as the flight of stars.

If we were our best selves it would be so, always so. We long for that sublime naturalness in our faith and love to God. We are shamed when it is otherwise. Shall a bubble neglect or deny the sea? Shall a voice strike at the air? Shall a dove make difficult with its wings or decry them or forget them? And art not thou more to us in sweetness, wholeness, necessity than all besides? We are bubbles but shall not break, seeing we are of thee, thou Infinite Ocean. Our wings need not weary, being of thee and bearing us toward thee.

Hold us, O Mightiest Help, that we take thee as the lily the wave on which it blooms. We must gather white and gold from thee as the lily from the sun, and because it effortlessly does this, it flowers out a wonder and a joy.

Direct our flowering out of life that it be as effortless as the falling of the dark and as fragrant as the incense at the altar of God, we pray in Christ our Lord. Amen.







BX  
8333  
Q3  
H4

**THEOLOGY LIBRARY**  
**SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT**  
**CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA**

**441174**

